

**AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION**  
**2016 AIR, SPACE & CYBER CONFERENCE**  
**Remarks by Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James**  
**19 September 2016**

SECRETARY JAMES: Good morning, everyone, good morning. Frank and I are just simply delighted to be back here at AFA with all of you. And I also loved that video. Did you think that was a great video? I do. [Applause] Because it gives a sense, just a sense but an important sense, of all of the important work that is going on in our Air Force today. Global vigilance, global reach, global power, no one does it better than the United States Air Force, and I can't think of a better way to continue to celebrate our 69th birthday as a military service.

Scott, I want to thank you for that nice introduction, but most of all I want to thank you for all of your hard work over the years as Chairman of the Board at AFA. And if I tried to list all of the things, everything that you have done for our Air Force, both in your military career and at AFA, you served 30 years in our Air Force, of course you've been a lifelong member of AFA, and simply put, you've been the best. And I know I speak for everyone in our Air Force family when I wish you and Barbara clear skies and tailwinds on the next leg of your journey. And wherever that journey may take you I also know, we know, that you will always be there for us. So thank you very much, Scott Van Cleef. [Applause]

I'm also thrilled that my good friend and the former Secretary of the Air Force, Whit Peters, is answering the call in a new way to support our Air Force going forward because you see he was just elected as the next AFA Chairman. That just happened yesterday. And, Whit, if you are here in the audience, congratulations and I know that you're going to do a fantastic job in this new role just as you have for us throughout many, many years.

I also want to give a quick shout out to some other folks who are with us here today. We have many of our civilian leaders in the Air Force with us today. I see Lisa Disbrow,

our fantastic Undersecretary here in the front row, and there are others as well. We say hello also to our MAJCOM Commanders, all of whom are in attendance. We have our 12 outstanding Airmen of the Year who are here with us throughout AFA and we're going to have lots of time to fuss over them later on today and particularly tonight. Welcome to our NATO Air Chiefs who are here with us in the audience. We also have our civic leaders, industry partners, and just lots and lots of Airmen out there.

A warm and special welcome to our 21st Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Dave Goldfein and his wife, Dawn. Yes, give him a round of applause. [Applause] General Goldfein brings just a huge wealth of experience to the table. He's been a combat pilot, he's been Director of the Joint Staff, he's a deep, deep strategic thinker on the role of the Air Force in future operations, but most importantly, most important of all he is an Airman's Airman.

And I also want to recognize Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Cody and his wife Athena who are also here front and center. [Applause] Ever since I have been in this role I can think of no better source of counsel than Chief Cody, because you see in Chief Cody our enlisted Airmen have had a tireless advocate and a committed leader. And, oh, by the way, Athena Cody, or should I say Chief Master Sergeant Retired Athena Cody -- she herself served more than 27 years in uniform and she is still serving with our key spouse programs and on the Military Readiness Council. So many thanks to both of you.

And then I saw General Larry Spencer just a few moments ago, our former Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force and he's now the President of AFA. I just want to say to Larry, he has done so much for us in the Air Force throughout his 40 years of service, but the thing that I remember first again happened during my tenure, and that's where he really galvanized his commitment to a culture of innovation and efficiency in our Air Force. You see he was the

father of what we call the 'Make Every Dollar Count' campaign. It is one of my top priorities, I've embraced it in a big way, and it has caught fire all around the Air Force, that culture of innovation and efficiency. So thanks also to Larry Spencer and really to all of the Air Force Association members. Thanks to all of you for the great work that you do, because the bottom line here is because of what you do everything that we do is made easier.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I never thought I would stand in front of a crowd and say what I'm about to say, so here goes. I have now worked in defense for 35 years. I never thought I would be old enough to make that statement, but the day has arrived. It all started for me in the year 1981. I was fresh out of school and I was hired as a civilian in the Department of the Army. And after a couple of years in that position I transitioned to be a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee. And again this was the period of the early '80s. And when I was working in the House I remember vividly that Air Force leaders came to testify in front of our Committee on how air power was going to transform the battlefield. They told us about how a new generation of precision guided munitions were going to negate the Soviet Union's advantage in tanks and in troops along the inner German border. And you know what, they were dead right. The Soviets saw what Airmen flying fourth generation fighters could do, and they saw the advanced technologies our defense industrial base had produced, and they saw also how NATO had become a more integrated and a more effective fighting force. And they just knew at that moment that this important collaboration between our Airmen, our joint partners, industry, and our allies, that together we would in fact transform the world. Global vigilance, global reach, and global power. In some it became a global security team. And a few years later that team put on quite the show. We tend to forget it now, but I remember hearing back in the year 1991 -- and this was at the dawn of the Desert Storm campaign -- I

remember hearing all about the battle tested Iraqi military, how they were armed with top of the line Soviet equipment. I'll call that the before picture. The after picture I think is one that most in this audience will remember. The after picture was mile after mile of smoldering wrecks of Iraqi armor littering the side of the highways. And that was courtesy of the global security team.

Americans were transfixed here at home. Many Americans back then remembered the fleets of B-17s during World War II that could blot out the sun, dropping ton after ton of free fall bombs. But those same Americans during Desert Storm sat there amazed and watched as a single F-117 fighter put a laser guided bomb down the ventilation shaft of a bunker. It was simply incredible. And we know now that that was just the start. In Desert Storm we were flying a mix of third and fourth generation aircraft. Last month of course we declared our newest aircraft, the F-35 Lightning II combat capable, and that's a fifth generation aircraft. The next generation tanker, the KC-46 Pegasus, will be coming in the next year, and the bomber for the 21st century, the B-21, will come some years after that. In Desert Storm less than 10 percent of the munitions we used were guided, but in the fight against Daesh in Iraq and Syria almost all of those weapons are precision.

Desert Storm, we exploited space systems designed for a strategic conflict, and we did so for that tactical fight, but today we design and operate space systems for strategic, tactical, and operational missions. Since I started working in this field the Air Force has added a new domain to our responsibilities, and of course that domain is the domain of cyber and we are committed, we are absolutely committed to being as dominant in this domain as we are in air and space. And now of course we're much, much better at integrating all of the domains across all of our core mission areas. Finally, since Desert Storm, we have a whole new class of weapons that have been introduced into the inventory, and here I'm referring to the remotely piloted aircraft.

These aircraft too have transformed the way we do ISR, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, and the way that we now conduct precision strikes.

So you see, there have been many, many changes since Desert Storm, but some things have not changed. For example, 25 years ago we were supported by more than 30 coalition partners, today more than 60 partners support Operation Inherent Resolve. Indeed many of those partners are represented here today and together we have demonstrated our commitment to excising the tumor that is Daesh and we've conducted together more than 3000 strikes in Iraq and Syria since the campaign began. All of that time, meanwhile, our nuclear forces have stood ready for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing that critical nuclear deterrent capability for our nation and for our allies.

Here's another constant, the global security team is still hard at work around the world, and I would submit even more so than they were two decades ago. In July I had the opportunity to visit Ämari Air Base in Estonia, and there I saw Royal Air Force Typhoons who are patrolling the skies. And then just a few short weeks later, still in Estonia, A-10s from the 442nd Fighter Wing and KC-135s from the 185th Air Refueling Wing, they arrived for a training deployment as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. And then last month I was in Asia, I saw the work being done in support of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines. You see we're working to train with our partners in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and we're using our Air Force assets to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea. On every corner of the map our Airmen are engaged with allies and partners to enhance global security and stand tall against aggression.

As I have traveled the world virtually all of our partners tell me they want more U.S. Air Force, could be more exercises, more training, more exchanges, more interoperability.

Many have also complained to me about the slowness of the foreign military sales process, which after all is a key process that helps our collective security and our collective interoperability. So I recently challenged our Air Force to focus on speeding up our piece of the FMS process. And as a result now we are going to go forward to increase our training for our Security Cooperation officers so that they can help our international and industry partners better define requirements right from the beginning, which should reduce a lot of the back and forth that happens early on in FMS cases. This should help speed it up.

We're also going to put more attention from senior leaders on the most complex cases. I'm speaking here of cases like the sale of F-15s or C-17s. These are the ones that tend to run into most problems. And when there's a log jam we'll intervene personally, we'll engage to see if we can get it unstuck and unstuck promptly. This too should help speed it up. Overall we'll be looking to reduce the time it takes for the Air Force's portion of the FMS process by about 10 percent. That's the challenge that they have taken on. And we'll be measuring this going forward to ensure that in fact in the future we do speed it up, because when our allies use hardware produced by our industry partners and train on it with our Airmen the whole team works better together. It builds cooperative relationships across geographies, and between the public and private sectors, and enhances our national security, flying, fighting, and winning together as a global security team.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have now reached the point in my tenure where I am doing a lot of reflecting and there have been no issues more important to me over the last two and a half years than people issues. You see, when I became Secretary of the Air Force in late December of 2013, at that point the FY '15 budget was already prepared and ready for delivery to Capitol Hill. And that budget contained more personnel reductions. It turns out, as we all now

know, those reductions have been happening gradually ever since the 1990s when the Soviet Union fell apart. And these final cuts that were contained in that budget reflected the winding down of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and also in part, frankly, they reflected the budget crunch that the Air Force was feeling. As the new Secretary all of this seemed to make pretty good sense to me. At least it made pretty good sense on paper. However, as I started to travel, mostly in the spring of 2014 and beyond, I began to see that some of these PowerPoint presentations that we were receiving in Washington, they just didn't seem to be adding up anymore.

First of all, it seemed to me that we were short everywhere, everywhere. And it was clear to me that as I spoke to our Airmen the field was feeling significant strain. And then -- and then world conditions changed dramatically. Russia illegally invaded and annexed the Crimea, Daesh emerged and made an effort to establish a so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria, and Afghanistan didn't exactly turn out to be any picnic either. More air power was needed in the Pacific to keep North Korea in check and protect freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

So by later summer 2014 it was very apparent that we needed to stop what would have been an additional round of involuntary personnel reductions, and instead we needed to bake end strength growth into the next budget, the FY '16 budget, and that's exactly what we did. With the help of then-Secretary Hagel and now-Secretary Carter, President Obama, and those on Capitol Hill, by the end of this year our active duty end strength will be 317,000, which I consider to be the first step in reversing what has been a historic downsizing. And there will be more growth to follow, mark my words. And it will be done like we do everything else in our Air Force, in a total Force way.

For me, by the way, it's not just about getting more people, though we do need more people in our Air Force, it's also about getting high quality people, the right people. Make no mistake, we are in a battle for talent. So it's about recruiting and developing and retaining the best among them. It's about the quality of their experience in the Air Force. And for me at least it's also been about paying special attention to certain communities that have required some special attention. So all of this is why we launched a diversity and inclusion initiative about a year and a half ago to try to and build an even more innovative and skillful team of Airmen in the future from diverse backgrounds and experiences, demographics, and perspectives.

Soon General Goldfein, Chief Cody, and I will launch a second tranche of initiatives to make sure that we have access to future Airmen from all geographies and all backgrounds, and that all Airmen can succeed and advance according to their skills and education. Stay tuned for this second roll out of diversity and inclusion initiatives; it will be coming soon.

We've also doubled down on our commitment to prevent sexual assault and other forms of violence in our Air Force. And I'm certain we are making progress in this regard, but we absolutely have to continue to press. When it does occur we have ramped up victim care, investigative assets, and over time we've reformed the military justice system in coordination with the Congress.

We've paid special attention to some other communities of Airmen within the Force as well, including the nuclear enterprise and the world of the remotely piloted aircraft, the RPA. When it comes to our nuclear Airmen we have realigned the missile operations career field to expand advancement and development opportunities for our ICBM officers. And we've made taking care of these Airmen a priority in our budget, from day to day needs like new



mission support vehicles, cold weather gear, to major recapitalization programs like the ground based strategic deterrent and the long range standoff weapon. Make no mistake about it, the nuclear enterprise is and will remain number one with all of us in the U.S. Air Force.

On the RPA front, a force I will say that has really been used to the hilt in recent years, we've launched what we call a get well plan, which over time is designed to ease some of the strain. Over time what we want is we want more RPA pilots in the cockpits, we want better quality of life, and we want more opportunity for our RPA Airmen. So far we've doubled the RPA pilot output at our training units and increased the guard as well as industry's participation in ISR missions. We're also looking to stand up two new MQ-9 operating locations. We've increased compensation, and finally we're opening the world of the Global Hawk to enlisted pilots in the future.

For all Airmen, General Goldfein and I recently launched a process to eliminate, re-designate, or reassign some of the additional duties that were sapping our Airmen's time. And this, by the way, is what we consider to be a modest beginning to what will be a longer ongoing process. The next step for us will be to attack the amount of time Airmen spend on computer based training. So more to follow on this one as well.

And, finally, I will tell you that we are working with Congress to ensure fair compensation for all, including protecting basic allowance for housing, expanding eligibility for continuation pay for everyone under the new retirement program. We need higher bonuses for our aviators. We are particularly concerned about our fighter pilot retention and we're pulling out the stops to improve quality of life and the quality of their service. We want to level survival benefits for reserve component members, and we want to ensure funding for important family programs, like child development centers, and base support and MWR programs.

And last, but not least, we need to make sure that we have robust funding going forward in our readiness accounts. This includes things like our training accounts, our flying hours. Readiness is frequently considered to be different than our people issues, but at least for me over the last two and a half years I have come to view the two as inextricably linked, and readiness is key to taking care of people.

Another area of concentration for me has been our modernization programs. As this audience well knows we have the oldest aircraft fleet that we've ever had, 27 years old on average, so this absolutely needs to be a focus going forward. Balancing this fleet with current demand, reduced capacity of aircraft and personnel, and technological advances among our adversaries make maintaining Air Force full-spectrum readiness a challenge. But we are taking the necessary steps to ensure the Air Force's dominance for another generation. • Our nuclear enterprise, which I already mentioned, and our Big Three modernization programs—F-35, KC-46, and B-21—all of these are centerpieces of our modernization effort, but they're not the whole story. And, by the way, I'm going to come back to the B-21 in just a few moments.

Another big piece of the story, and one where I've tried to devote a lot of personal attention, is space. So in addition to serving as Secretary of the Air Force I'm also what's called the Principal DOD Space Advisor. And in that role I provide independent advice on space issues directly to our DOD senior leadership, and I have a seat at the major decision making tables within the Department, budget requirements and strategy. Over the last few years you should know collectively we in the Department have added billions of dollars to the space enterprise. And why is that so? It's so, because space is now contested and congested and it's extremely important to everything that we do in the military, including precision guidance, navigation, missile warning, weather, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and communications. This

year we conducted a strategic portfolio review that focused on protected communications and missile warning mission areas, and improving our battle management and command and control capabilities. But most importantly we are changing the culture in our space enterprise because we need to get our heads around for the future what happens if a conflict on earth extends to space. How will we defend our assets? And I'm going to tell you how. We're going to train differently, and that's why we're building a space mission force that improves our readiness for a conflict that may extend to space. And we're going to become more resilient in our systems over time. And we will operate differently as well. That's exactly why we stood up the Joint Interagency Space Operations Center, otherwise known as the JICSpOC. That's our newest space battle lab and it's also giving us great experience and enhancing our unity of effort with the intelligence community.

And finally, we will get off the reliance on a Russian-built engine so that in the future we continue to have at least two pathways to space. So that we have that important mission assurance but we will do so with engines that have been fully made in America.

Although a presidential election year of course is upon us, and this is top of mind for many in our country, for us in the Air Force we are completely focused on getting our authorization and our appropriation goals FY'17 completed as quickly as possible. Because you see, none of the priorities that I've just mentioned are possible without the close partnership with the Congress.

Unfortunately, at this point it appears that a continuing resolution is all but a certainty at this point, and I will tell you that if it is a short-term continuing resolution, let's say, three months or so, we can manage our way through that. This will be the eighth straight year that we will have done so, but I also want to tell you that long-term CR would be very, very

damaging for the Air Force.

For example, it would reduce our funding overall for the Air Force by 1.3 billion [dollars] as compared to our [FY]17 requests. It would limit training and readiness accounts across the board for the total Force, including it could impact drill weekends in our Guard and Reserve. If it's a year-long CR, there would be no National Guard and Reserve equipment account. There would be no NGREA. It would reduce the replenishment of our stocks, the precision munitions, which is not a good idea at a time when we are in a fight with a group called Daesh, and it would cap the production of the KC-46. It would prevent us from devoting the right amount of funds to the B-21 next year, and delay about 50, or so, military construction projections, some of which would impact the F-35 and other important mission areas.

So the bottom line here is, we need our builds as soon as possible, we need them certainly by the December timeframe, and we need sequestration to be lifted permanently.

Ladies and gentlemen, this may be the last time that I have the privilege to come before you and speak to you in this particular role, and I want you all to know that serving as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Secretary of the Air Force has, without question, been the greatest honor of my professional life.

And the men and women in uniform that I have worked with have been a constant, constant inspiration to me. Our Air Force is the best on the planet for one very simple reason, and that is because we have the finest people. We have the finest corps of operators and maintainers and logistician, and force support professionals in the world.

We have the finest warriors in remotely-piloted aircrafts, in the nuclear enterprise, space, cyberspace, our fighter force, airlifters and aerial tankers. And you'd better believe we have the finest corps of bombers.

From the early days of World War I our bombers defined the battlefield. In World War II, the Eighth Air Force Fleet brought the Nazi War machine to its knees.

And in the Pacific the Doolittle Raiders and brave bomber crews took the war to the Japanese. The heavy bomber became the symbol of American strategic power, always ready and never afraid. And since then, in every single conflict, our bomber Airmen have been in the fight.

B-52s brought unprecedented fire power to the jungles of Vietnam and we are still flying and fighting with them today. B-1s deliver massive payloads of precision weapons against any adversary, anywhere in the world. And our B-2s can hold any target at risk, because the adversary can't fight what it can't see.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the legacy of America's strategic airpower continues. You may recall at the AFA Conference in Orlando, I told you that we were going to hold a contest to come up with a name for the B-21, our bomber for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Well, we have done that, and today I want to recognize three Airmen who answered that call to be part of a new Air Force legacy, and to name our new bomber. The first two Airmen I'm going to call out, submitted proposals that really captured the essence of the bomber force and they are the winners of our contest.

First, I want you all to know about Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Hernandez. And please direct your view to the video screens. Lieutenant Colonel Hernandez is the Commander of the 337th Test and Evaluation Squadron out at Dallas Air Force Base in Texas. And unfortunately he is not here with us today because he is doing extremely important work; he's deployed to Guam as part of our continuous bomber presence mission in the Asia-Pacific. But please thank, on behalf of AFA and all of us, Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Hernandez. [Applause]

Our second contest winner is with us here today. Technical Sergeant Derek White; and he is going to join me now on stage. Derek is an Emergency Management Craftsman assigned to the 175th Civil Engineering Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard, and Derek also submitted the winning name with a fantastic write up. We thank you, Technical Sergeant White, for your contribution in naming our new bomber. [Applause]

Let's now take a moment and celebrate our bomber legacy. [Music and video playing]

SECRETARY JAMES: -- and to announce the name of our new B-21, but first you should know that this is an Airman; he's a cut above all the rest. You see, he signed up for a one-way trip to Tokyo, back in April of 1942 with Jimmy Doolittle. It was an audacious mission to avenge Pearl Harbor and all the American lives lost. Our greatest generation, the generation of World War II secured our freedom for all of us, we've been able to live our lives as a result.

And today, I'm so honored to welcome to the stage, one of the greatest men of the greatest generation; who, by the way, just celebrated his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday; an icon of American airpower, Jimmy Doolittle's co-pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Dick Cole. [Music]

Lieutenant Colonel Cole, in the future, when the President calls the United States Air Force and puts us in the fight, what is the name of the bomber that will carry on for all of us?

LT. COL. COLE: Good morning.

GROUP: Good morning.

LT. COL. COLE: I'm very humbled to be here representing General Doolittle, and the Raiders, at the naming of the B-21 Raider, and wish they were here. We are deeply honored. Thank you. [Applause]

SECRETARY JAMES: If your heart is not pumping and pumping at this point,

then you may not be alive. So, the B-21 Raider, ladies and gentlemen; aim high, have a great AFA, thanks for all you do. Thank you.

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