

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III
Air Force Update
AFA Air Warfare Symposium
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Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqp9iHQoc34>

General Welsh: Thanks for having all of us here today. It's great to be here with you.

Let me ask some folks who are sitting up here in the front to stand up for just a second. Will all the major command commanders stand up and all the three stars off the Air Staff who are here, and any three stars who run anything. Stand up. [Applause]. These are really the guys who run the Air Force. I get to run around and eat dinner with people, which is really a pretty cool job.

Let me introduce two people in particular. I'd like to ask Sid Clarke and JJ Jackson to stand up. That's 700,000 people, sort of. About 105,000 of them really belong to Sid Clarke and Frank Grass in the Guard Bureau and all the TAGs in the States. Sid is Director of the Air National Guard, if you haven't met him; and right next to him is JJ Jackson who runs 70,000-some of our Air Force Reservists, and these guys do this job fantastically well, which is why we have always had, continue to have, and will always have the best total force integration of any service in this country. [Applause]. It doesn't mean we can't get better, gang. We're trying.

I'm going to kind of throw slides at you in a hurry if that's okay, because there are some pictures I want you to see.

Can I have the first slide?

Straight out of the leadership team at SAIC, the Honorable Debby James joins us as our Secretary of the Air Force with a reputation as a straight shooter, a hard worker and a really, really smart lady, and I can guarantee you, she's all those things. She is also our Secretary of the Air Force. Would you mind joining me in a round of applause for the boss? [Applause].

Thank you, ma'am. It's just wonderful to have you here.

I don't know if Eric Fanning's here. Eric are you here this afternoon? I think he had other plans today. Eric Fanning was our Acting Secretary while we were waiting on the confirmation process for Secretary James. If you haven't met Under Secretary Fanning, the greatest news about all this is he stayed with us. We get to keep using him. The second great news is that this guy is an Airman already. He thinks like one, he feels like one, he loves them like you guys do. Don't worry about the googly eyes here. He gets googly eyed when he shoots a 105mm Howitzer. [Laughter]. If you get a chance to meet Eric and you haven't before, please take advantage of that.

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I've been seeing this guy in the news a lot too. He's actually inspired me to do something today that I'm feeling a little uneasy about, because I've never leaked anything before, but I'm about to. There's a question that hundreds of thousands of people have been asking and I happen to know the answer. [Laughter]. I have the privilege in this job of doing a number of things that are really kind of life-altering in a really good way. Since I had a chance to visit AFA last I've had two of those events in my life. One of them, I was with some of the people in this room, I had the chance to attend the Doolittle Raiders' final toast at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson where General Jack Hudson and his team did such a magnificent job of hosting the foundation and the warriors themselves.

Two things stand out to me from that particular event. The first one was when I had the chance to talk to Lieutenant Cole seated there in the middle and asked him the one memory he takes away from the mission. What does he still remember all the time about the mission? He said, you know, I was sitting on the deck of the carrier, getting ready to launch in the first airplane. I looked to my left and I saw Jimmy Doolittle sitting in the left seat. I thought he was going to say something about his courage or he was scared to death or something, and he goes, I just couldn't believe how lucky I was to be flying with the greatest pilot on earth. Think about that. That's the memory. What a guy Jimmy Doolittle must have been, because Dick Cole is a pretty impressive guy. By the way he was in the three, when I asked him how the drinks tasted after they drank from the goblets one of the other guys said well, it tasted dusty, the other one said it tasted old, and he said it tasted like Happy Hour. [Laughter].

The other moment and the one that really will stick with me forever happened just after this picture was taken. The three surviving Raiders who were there, there was a fourth who physically couldn't make it, walked up to the outside memorial to the rest of the crews. A couple of Air Force Academy cadets had just placed this memorial wreath, and you can see Lieutenant Colonel Cole there on the right of the picture is starting to come to attention a little bit. A second after this picture was taken, the other two looked at him, saw that happening and then they all looked at each other and I think realized maybe for the first time, that this was it. This was the last time. All three of them, two standing and one in a wheel chair, came to attention. I lost it completely, along with everybody beside me in the front row. I will never, ever forget that moment in time. The pride that was captured in that instant took decades to build, and we share it. What a gift.

I also had the chance recently to speak at Robby Risner's funeral.... I spoke at Robby Risner's funeral.... I can't believe I can say that out loud. What a complete privilege. Mr. Ross Perot spoke right before me. He gave a eulogy to his personal friend for years. I followed and I spoke on behalf of all of you in this community. As I stood there and looked out at the audience, some of you were there and you know this, I looked at 40 of his brother POWs and his family. I was overwhelmed as I started to think about the life of this unbelievable man. Two Air Force Crosses, Distinguished Service Medal,

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two Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars with Valor, POW medal. Eight MiG kills, 108 combat tours. Seven years in captivity, four of them in solitary confinement.

The other POWs who were there that day talked about him in reverent terms. He was their rock. He was the moral advisor. He was the leader they turned to at a time when they terribly needed leadership. He was the guy who convinced them that they could and would survive. He just willed them to believe it and because he believed, they believed.

What a privilege to be there. What a hero. What an Airman.

Our great Air Force Honor Guard loaded him up on a caisson and they carried him down the hills in the hallowed grounds of Arlington, and 400,000 American heroes rose to meet him and to pay their respects and to welcome him home. I'll never forget that day.

But, while I really embrace our heritage and the tradition of our Air Force and the Army Air Corps before us, it's not the past that excites me. It's the future. This Air Force has a fantastic one.

We are going to fly the X-wing fighter someday, you wait and see. I won't see it, but it's coming. I don't know what a couple of those other things are, but they look cool. [Laughter]. You should know them.

Over the years, the last 70 years or so, the Air Force has had a lot of different guiding concepts that we've walked through. We've actually gone from strategic bombardment at the end of World War II in the late '40s and early '50s, to nuclear deterrence after the Korean War and as we built up Strategic Air Command and the world's greatest strategic force. We kind of drifted into AirLand Battle in the '70s and '80s. We picked up Global Reach/Global Power and Parallel Warfare designed by many of you in this room. Counterterrorism to support the counterinsurgency operations. Global Vigilance, Global Reach and Global Power.

The question for us now is, so what's next? Is it strategic agility? Cybercentric operations? Blended deterrence? All the above? Some combination of the above? Any number of other phrases we could throw on this slide? I don't know. We've got to figure this out and we've got to figure it out quick.

About a year ago I put out a document called the Air Force Vision. It was basically to remind our Airmen that we are successful because they are successful. They are the engine that drives the service, and their innovation is kind of the fuel that keeps us going.

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After that we put out a vision on Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. The idea was to make sure our Airmen understood that our core mission hadn't changed since 1947. They needed to understand where they fit directly or indirectly in those core missions. Then they had to understand how doing those jobs well allows us to produce this Vigilance, Reach and Power for the nation.

For the last year we've also been working on a resource strategy we call Air Force 2023. It's not an Air Force strategy, it's a resource strategy designed to get us to the end of sequestration. But this is what we've been missing. We need a strategy. We've needed one for a while. So we're writing it. It will be done by June. I don't know what it's going to say yet. I have thoughts, as do the people who are working on it. We'll talk to you about it in June. But let me tell you the pieces that are going to be in it.

There's going to be a 30 year look. We start at the bottom of that list on the left. This is a call to the future. It's to make sure we don't get our feet stuck in today and worried about the things we do today and never get to the point in the next 30 years where we can see over that 30 year hill. We've got to be always striving to get more and more altitude so we can see farther as to what's in our future. So it has to include a Strategic Assessment, a Violent Threat Assessment. It's got to include our Strategic Priorities and the different lines of operation from S&T to many others that keep us moving in a direction that allow us to stay on the leading edge of technology, that keep us engaged with industry the way you need us to be engaged with you and the way we need to be engaged. It's the call to the future that we have got to have if this service is going to be successful.

This will be reviewed every two years and it will be completely updated every four years. Basically gives every new Chief or every new Secretary a chance to make a change, to adjust it in the way they think is best suited for that time.

The second piece in this is a 20 year look. This is an attempt to bring the multiple master plans we currently have that are done by our four function leads around the Air Force, and integrate them into a single Air Force Master Plan that is integrated in full. This is going to be really important for us because it allows us to make the strategic trades across those portfolios that we have been struggling to get done here for the last few years. Everybody's working hard at it but the process doesn't make it simple. It's fiscally informing. We're going to predict what our top lines are going to be for 20 years, and then we're going to tie our own hands and try and live within them as we do our planning. This will actually be looked at as strategic off-ramp for places we can identify. If a program succeeds, can we accelerate production? If it fails, can we go to our Plan B? Are there pivot points we can identify where we can look at the world around us and make changes in production buy numbers or technologies we're pursuing or S&T priorities based on what's going on around us in the world.

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Then attached to this Master Plan will be Flight Plans for all the standard things you've seen flight plans and road maps for, to include things like ISR or bombers or human capital development, those kinds of things. This particular piece of the plan will be reviewed every year and updated every two years.

Finally we have that resource strategy, the 10 year look. This current one's called 2023. This is actually a balanced 10 year look, so we're going to balance the budget for 10 years and try and hold ourselves to that because if we don't it creates problems for us over time.

It will have an integrated planning force. The first five years of this essentially become the POM input, then the next year we redo it again and balance it for 10 more so we keep reality in our funding streams and the projections we're making for down the road.

This picture has absolutely nothing to do with what I've been talking about, but I really like this picture. [Laughter]. I know exactly how that dog feels. [Laughter]. But I'll tell you what, if we don't have an organization whose job is to take care of that strategy I just talked about, to build it, to edit it, to update it, to question it, to review it, to constantly push it and make bigger demands on it, then just like that poor pooch there, that strategy dog won't hunt.

So we're going to do that on the Air Staff. As part of our reorganization we're looking at taking our A-3-5 that exists today and our A-8, and we're taking the operations and plans functions in A-3-5, and we're going to make the A-3 an operator, again. And we're going to move the strategic planning strategy and the long range resource planning into the A-5-8 and we're going to take the sausage-making part of the A-8 out and put it into the FM. We combined the sausage-making parts physically a couple of years back because that made perfect sense to have the synergies of them working side by side. So all the people who do the grinding on entering stuff into the database, keeping the numbers right, doing the accounting, are now all going to be working for the same boss. We all work for the same boss ultimately. This allows the A-5-8 to think about the strategy side of the house. Maybe we can actually get to a place where we'll build a strategy and a plan that will inform the resource work that we're doing. That would be nirvana for us. That's the goal.

It will take us a generation of people on the Air Staff to get through it. No matter how we get there, whether that's successful in the near term or not, our Secretary has given us three very clear priorities to follow the day she walked on the job. These are not out of line with those, they're perfectly in line with those, but these are some four things I think specifically we have to think about on the operational and people side of the Air Force to meet her very definite goals. We have to do these four things. Let me talk about each of them.

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First, these are the five core missions I mentioned I don't believe will change. I still don't believe they'll change. We've been doing them since 1947. We added space superiority. I don't think we thought about it back then. We'll probably add a couple of other missions in space and probably a new mission at some point in cyber, although I don't know what it is. Right now it's important for us to understand that what we do in cyber are those missions. We just do them mainly through the cyber domain, and that will be more true in the future than it is today as we figure out how to do that.

I believe very firmly that if we look at the missions we've been doing for the last 60 years we will see corollaries that we can do in both space and cyber. We're already doing ISR in and through the space domain just like we did through the air domain. Someday we will do strike from space. It will be a while, but I think that will happen eventually too. It may be cyber strike, because we'll strike in and through the cyber domain also just like we do ISR in and through the cyber domain. We do command and control in and through the cyber domain. Someday I believe we'll be doing armed escort of information in the cyber domain. We'll be doing precision air drop of data in the cyber domain. This isn't that cosmic if you understand the roles we play to a joint commander and to the nation. There they are, those five missions. We do them differently than we used to do them and we'll do them a lot more differently in the future. Over the next 20 to 30 years my guess is the most difference will be how we play this ratio between how much we do in air, space and cyber. How do we create the best effect by using which balance?

Let me real briefly talk about each one and give you an idea where our vectors are today in those mission areas.

This is still what air superiority looks like if you're airborne. This is still what it looks like if you're on the ground. If you're a friendly. If you're the enemy and you try this, this is what a national cemetery looks like when it starts. No other nation in the world can fight the way our Army and Marine Corps fight. Nobody else has the ability to operate like this. To move with this kind of speed and this kind of precision and this kind of mass. Against us, you wouldn't do this. You wouldn't move at all, ever again.

The F-35 is about to join our air superiority team. This is the first AMRAAM test shot. Congratulations to those of you who were involved with that. We have to have it because the F-22 buy was truncated. Good or bad, it doesn't matter at this point. It was truncated and we don't have enough F-22s to provide air superiority for a theater's worth of conflict. And if it's a high end conflict you're going to need to have the F-35 to support it, before it goes and does the things it was supposed to be designed to do. It's just the way it is.

So in the air superiority arena here's the vector we're on. This isn't everything that Mike Hostage and the gang are doing, but these are some of the things. We've got to get F-35 fielded. We've got to keep pushing it. It will make it. It's going to make it. The

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Secretary was just there yesterday and got a good look at the program. There are things we've got to work, but we're actually I think, in my mind, in a pretty good place here.

Fourth to fifth generation aircraft sharing data is a problem for us. We have to fix this. I've been working it really hard.

Anything that's a nice-to-have upgrade on the platform over the next ten years is out. Those things we have to put on the platform to upgrade is they're viable against emerging threats, think things like AESA radars, maybeIRST systems, those kinds of things, datalinks that work. We can't opt out of those things or we will put our people at risk. Missile upgrades, weapon upgrades, they've got to happen for us to be viable ten years from now. And folks, it's time to start working on the sixth gen fighter. Nobody wants to hear that, but it's time. We'll see how much we can get done, but we've got to think and talk about it right now.

Next slide.

Sorry, classified slide. I'd love to tell you more about that. [Laughter].

Space superiority is actually a great mission for our Air Force. We've got about 15,000 people on any given day in Air Force Space Command doing this mission, worrying about space situational awareness. Worrying about space superiority. We have people flying 77 satellites and 6 constellations. There are about 1100 or 1200 satellites still active in space. 1100 or 1200 or so that we're tracking. There are 100,000 plus other objects up there that we're tracking and we have people doing this around the clock, 24x7. It's a fantastic mission and it's an absolutely essential mission for the future of national security. Forget any particular mission area, it affects all of them.

Space situational awareness is now the coin of the realm in space and we cannot back away from this. You've all heard discussions about Space Fence. We're committed to Space Fence. We're moving forward with it.

Here's the vectors that Willy will tell you we're kind of into now, because in the environment of space it's becoming more and more contested, it requires us to think about things in different ways and our great professionals in Space Command are doing that. It means situational awareness is really all important, just like it is in the air domain or the cyber domain. It means you've got to think about things like having Space Fence to see those things that are in low earth orbit. You've got to have the Space Telescope to look at the Geo Band and things in deep space. We've got to have ways of seeing what's on the battlefield.

We've got to get better processing capabilities. Many of you are working that for us. We've got to get better data integration. We've got to improve command and control

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because the problem is going to get tougher. We hope the new Joint Space Operation Center Mission System is going to allow us to do that. I know everybody's working it pretty hard. Thank you for that. But this is kind of where we're heading right now in a couple of the areas that Willy's focused on every single day.

While I'm talking about Space Command, let me throw in some of the things he's doing on the cyber side. These are some of the things that the force is working on. I would tell you that this transfer to a single network is a huge deal. It's actually going pretty well. It's the first step to get to AFNET before we migrate to the Joint Information Environment and those places where we can't go direct. And then that last line is what I was talking about before. How do we get enough knowledge about operating in the cyber domain to the people who operate in the other domains that they can logically slide their mission set into that domain and operate there comfortably? This is going to take us a while because we don't have a lot of people who are expert at both of them. We'll get them, we just don't have a lot of them now.

This is another picture that has nothing to do with anything, but I saw this and I really liked the picture.

Betty and I have our 36th wedding anniversary coming up in about a week here, and being married for 36 years to a personal trainer, dietician, kind of sucks. [Laughter]. She's munching on lava rock and I'm fast roping Twinkies down my gullet. So I feel like this a lot. This makes me comfortable.

We do the same thing to a whole lot of people around the world who are bad guys. You go to Afghanistan right now, if you're a militant party, if you're in al-Qaida, you're in the Taliban, somebody's watching you too. This is what ISR looks like if you're that person, or if you're a tactic squad leader on the ground. If you're a theater commander, this is what ISR looks like. If you're the National Command Authority this might be what ISR looks like to you. But no matter where you're sitting, from squad leader on up, this is what you're looking for. This is the crack cocaine on intelligence right here. Whether it's audio/video stuff, streaming imagery, it doesn't matter what kind of product it is, this is what people want.

When we hit the first goal forward, nobody knew what ISR was. Twenty-three to 24 year later we've got PhDs at the squad NCO level who know how to use ISR products and how to test the system. The game has changed. It has changed principally because the Air Force has built the system and we have a work force that can move this kind of data all over the world at the speed of light and get it to people who put it to use to remove bad guys from the fight. It is a stunningly, stunningly effective example of American military power, generated by Airmen primarily. All that infrastructure that's making it work.

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We've got a lot of other people in the services who are great at this, don't get me wrong, but we should be taking full credit for this and our people should know how proud we are that we're putting this together. And by the way, all the technology that makes it work, those of you sitting in the room here made it happen.

Here's what we're thinking about in ISR right now. How do we integrate our ISR activity across those domains in a way that's more meaningful than the examples we've been able to pull apart now? It's about moving data. It's about moving finished intelligence projects. It's about getting it where it needs to go when it needs to be there. So whether you call it processing exploitation and dissemination or distribution or TCPED or whatever you call it in your current program or proposals, it's moving stuff. We've got to get better and better and better at this because we have lots of stuff to move. Then we've got to balance our portfolios in the Air Force. We can't have an entire fleet of soda straws sucking up full motion video. That had a time. The time is changing. So we've got to be postured in a way that we can make sure our bosses understand where we think we need to go to provide the best support to our combatant commanders. That's what we've been in the process of trying to do this last year.

Rapid Global Mobility is a national asset. We have roughly 130,000 people in our Air Force who do it all the time. It's pretty incredible. The one question I've never heard asked in any meeting in Washington, DC, or anywhere else when we were talking about an operational response, whether it was in the Tank or in the SecDef's office or in the White House, and they were talking about moving something to a problem, I have never heard anyone ask can we get there? What a huge compliment to Paul Selva and his team and the other mobility folks and loggies around the military, TRANSCOM and other places. It's an incredible compliment.

We fly about 600 airlift sorties a day in the United States Air Force. So about every two and a half minutes another airlifter takes off to do the nation's business. Every two and a half minutes, every hour, every day of the year. It's stunning. You just don't know about it all the time. It never quits.

This is what a C-17 looks like if you're a Philippine refugee. This is what it looks like if you're a wounded warrior. By the way, that's an Air National Guard airplane from Jackson, Mississippi. It's an Air Force Reserve medical team. It's an active duty critical care action team looking after two of those warriors. Any time somebody tells me there's a problem with the total force I email them this picture and tell them this flight happens every week.

This is what a C-17 looks like if you're a Marine coming home from the war. This is what it looks like if you're Sergeant John Blanton getting ready to drop resupplies in Afghanistan to forward outposts. This is what it looks like to Micronesia, the longest running air drop campaign in history, Operation Christmas. Resupplying the islanders out there, which some of you great airlifters have had a chance to do. This is what it

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looks like to Nate Paulin and Ryan Peters at Bagram Air Base in their C-130J as they land from another blacked-out mission on NBGs, flying for six or eight hours around Afghanistan in the dark.

Air refueling is the life blood of U.S. strategic mobility. You guys remember KCX? This was the artist's rendering of the KC-46A. Just this week Secretary James signed a piece of paper approving a recommendation from Paul Selva that we give it a name. This is now the KCT-46A Pegasus. It's a proud name.

I had a chance to see the first airplane on the assembly line up at Everett, Washington here a couple of weeks back. It will be flying in June. It's a real thing now.

We've got a team of engineers, the Boeing team, the Air Force team. They are so excited to be working on this airplane. The Boeing guys on the production line that have worked commercial aircraft their whole career, they just can't stand it that they're working on a military airplane. They are so proud of this. This is a great team in action.

Here's where Paul's going as far as his vectors go. KC-46 is really a great thing, but we're going to buy 179 of them. The last one will deliver in 2028 and we'll still have 200-plus KC-135s that are 65 years old or older. So KC-Y and KC-Z also have to become programs and we've got to get on that now.

He's working on Airman sustainment. To maintain this operation around the globe is not an easy task.

Finally, precision air drop is becoming more and more and more precise. It used to be we required a 600 meter drop zone. Then it became something the size of this auditorium, maybe a little bit bigger. Then it became the front of the room. Now it's the stage or smaller. Pretty soon they'll be able to put it on the steps.

They're flying JPADS up valleys now so the airplane doesn't have to go over the high terrain. It's pretty incredible what's been done.

Global Strike, it's a little bit different. It's everything from F-16s at Kunsan to B-2s out of Whiteman. This is what it looks like on the ground. One airplane, one pass, 16 individually targeted Joint Direct Attack Munitions. Every hangar on the airfield destroyed. We're pretty good at what we do.

This is Global Strike, too. This is the Minuteman III test shot out at Brandenburg heading 4,200 miles downrange to the Marshall Islands. We don't want to see a whole lot of these.

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Here are the vectors we've got going in Global Strike. We're standing strong on the Long Range Strike Bomber. We have to have that capability. We need to deliver it in the mid 2020s.

Dynamic targeting has become a fact of life in the conflicts over the last five to ten years, and it's becoming harder and harder to get enough assets to do it because our guys are getting better and better at it and the demand's increasing. Just like ISR pilots.

Human capital development. We've got to worry about our people. Right now. You've read the issues in the paper. The Secretary will probably get a chance to talk to you a little about it tomorrow, but our people need some attention right now. Not because they can't do the job, just because they're kind of wandering a little bit. We'll get this under control. We'll get everything lined up again. We'll get charging forward. But we've got to pay attention to this. And we can't stop paying attention once we think we're feeling better. It's got to be continuous.

We've got to figure out how we do integrate strike in and through the cyber domain. Is it always going to be nuclear deterrence or is it going to be on nuclear/cyber deterrence? One day will it be cyber deterrence? I don't know. It's a strategic discussion and our Air Force needs to be in the middle of it so our voice is heard.

Then of course we've got weapons and facilities in the nuclear arena especially that we have got to get serious about recapitalizing.

Command and control is something we do every single day. 53,000 Airmen every day are doing command and control around the world through combatant commanders. Air defense, ISR activity, missile defense, you name it, they're doing it. They do it phenomenally well. Nobody else can do it on a theater scale. It may be happening at the Joint Space Operation Center, may be happening in the leading operation center on the planet, downrange where right now John Hesterman runs all the air activities in the Middle East. This is a phenomenal operation. A lot of our allies have been embedded with us there for a while, doing great work. I thank all of you who are here today because most of you have worked that.

Here's what we're doing in command and control. This whole concept of where you plan, how you execute, we've morphed it in different ways every day, but the concept is centralized planning/decentralized execution. The problem we've got now is can you keep your command and control [flying] open. With cyber as a threat growing, with enemy capabilities growing over time, it's at risk again. We hadn't thought about that for a while. Now how do you figure out different ways of doing control for these distant decentralized operations? Our team is working this one pretty hard.

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The things on the bottom are just examples of things we need to start thinking about, things we are trying to develop today to make this more robust and resilient.

So after focusing on that mission, we need to focus on the people who do it. One of the things we've got to keep doing is developing and celebrating our Airmen. The two things are different.

Major John Burger walked into my office a while back. I said hey, John, I want to show a video at AFA, can you get the combat camera guys to help me work up a video for me? John walked in and said yeah, I've got this idea. We have a bomb going off and then we kind of back up. What I told him is I wanted to try to get to how everybody's involved. Everybody in our Air Force, directly or indirectly, impacts combat power. They just do. They just don't know it. They should know. We've got to tell them.

So I said how are we going to get at that?

So John walked in and he gave me this idea of a bomb going off and then we back up and look at all the things that happened to get to that point. I said great. Why don't you try sketching that you? This was the [royal we] that was working on this film, by the way. He comes back in with this picture. You can't read it from where you are, but there is everything. This goes back to your commissioning source, all the different programs, training, all your instructors, the people you train with, your roommates, everybody's there. It's incredible. So I said it's perfect, let's do a video. Can we run that video?

[Video available: "Airpower in Rewind" --

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZ7kmg8bj8U&feature=youtu.be>

Thanks to the 2nd Combat Camera Squadron. They're just magic. It's incredible what they do.

Let's talk about developing that force, because all of them are critically important to what we do. A couple of quick comments on the enlisted and the officer force. We're getting lots of questions about what's been going on. We have a number in the audience today, so excuse me if you're not interested in the development of our folks as much as our folks are, but let me just give them an update.

On the personal side for the enlisted force, you're still required to have Community College of the Air Force completed. You guys know that. There's no rumors about changing that, there's no discussion about it. Bachelor degrees and advanced degrees are still encouraged if you can get them. We understand it's hard to do and it takes time. It's not something you're going to be graded against with your peers. It's the CCAF degree that you have to have. That's the requirement.

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On the right hand side of the page we're still going to require the Leadership School, we're still going to have NCO Academy and Senior NCO Academy. The difference is that both NCO Academy and Senior NCO Academy are going to be blended learning in the future. We've already run the beta test on Senior NCO Academy of the correspondence courses required before you go in residence. It will actually shrink the length of the residence course. They will not repeat the material you get from the on-line version. It's not a CVT type of learning. It's much more involved than that. So that will be tested this fall and then we'll go fully operational next spring on the NCO Academy Course. The Senior NCO Course has already been tested and we'll start it up next spring as well. That's the game plan.

Lots of rumors about new EPRs, Boards, et cetera. Let me tell you what's happened. The MAJCOM chiefs, and the enlisted Board of Directors, have been looking for a while at how can we change the enlisted performance report, should we change it, and what would be the impact of doing that? Let me tell you the guidance I gave them that started all this. I told them that I was concerned that a really average tech sergeant can make master sergeant at the same time as a really phenomenal tech sergeant. The reality is, your job performance doesn't have anything to do with it. As long as you don't shoot yourself in the foot, you're going to get a 5 on your EPR and it will be lots of points. It will be time in grade, time in service, that's what's going to make the difference. RAND did a study for us and showed, I can't remember if it was 1.4 or 1.6 percent, one point something percent. That's the impact of your performance on your promotion all the way up through master sergeant. There's something wrong with that.

Fundamentally, I want our best tech sergeants promoted to master sergeant first. There needs to be a logical time in service and time in grade requirement, but our best performers we need as Senior NCOs faster so we can use them longer in that role to lead our Air Force. And I don't know any master sergeant who would disagree with that, by the way.

That doesn't mean we haven't had qualified people we've promoted in the past, it just means our best people are not moving forward quickly. We did a mock board here last year. In that mock Board that Chief Cody oversaw, about a 25 percent difference in who was promoted by the mock Board which was handled more like a Senior Master Sergeant Board where records are scored and weighting is given to job performance versus how the other Board came out. And a lot of the people who weren't promoted in that 25 percent were the very highest scoring records in some of the skill sets who were just a year or two below the normal time in grade for people meeting a Board. In one career field the best scoring [person] in the career field was not promoted under our current system, and would have been under the other system.

So we're looking at this. Nothing's final yet. Lots of discussions still to come. You'll hear more over the next three or four months, I think, Chief. That's probably the safe

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time frame. That's where we're going with that on both the EPR and the Board. They're connected. There's a reason for them being together.

The bottom line there is what's really important to all of you NCOs out here in the room. Job performance is what we should value most. It's not that we don't value volunteer work off duty. All those things are wonderful, but when it comes to promoting people to serve in our Air Force at senior grades, officer or enlisted, job performance is what should matter most.

On the officer side we have right now I don't know how many interpretations of when a master's degree is required. If we have 100,000 officers we probably have 100,000 interpretations. We're about to pass a package to the Secretary and my recommendation to her will be -- she's smarter than I am, by the way, gang, so there may be something that pops up here -- but the recommendation that we've spent a lot of time talking about this with the leadership of the Air Force, is that we think the Air Force should have an education requirement. We do not have one right now, by the way. There's no requirement in the United States Air Force to have a master's degree and get promoted to any rank. We have a four star without a master's degree. But everybody thinks there's one and a lot of people think it's at major. That's crazy. So we're going to make a requirement to be promoted to colonel that you must have a master's degree. That gives you a lot of time to get it. You get picked up for school, you're going to get it when you go to school.

The other thing we're going to do is make it a requirement before you get considered for promotion to major, lieutenant colonel or colonel, to have squadron officer school, intermediate service school, or senior service school completed before you can be promoted. It's a requirement for promotion.

Squadron officer school is changing. We're shrinking the course. It's going to be a 100 percent opportunity for every active duty officer to go. Don't take it by correspondence. There is no requirement to do that. If you get within a year of your major's board and you've been operationally deferred, go take it then. We're going to give you a chance to go.

For intermediate service school and senior service school, if you get selected to go, don't take it by correspondence. In fact we're going to keep you from taking it by correspondence. Just wait, and get it done when you go. You'll get a master's degree at the same time. Quit double dipping on everything. We do not have to operate that way. Our job is going to be, us in the front of the room, to make sure that all our senior rates who give out DP recommendations understand that we have changed this. We'll change it for everybody. So if it changes back at some magic time in the future, everybody will have been affected the same.

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It's about job performance, guys. I want young officers doing their job, getting as good as they can, and then going home and being young husbands, young wives, young mothers and fathers, young friends and buddies. Have a life. We can do that and still be really good Airmen.

If you like to learn, knock yourself out. You can have as many degrees as you want. If they make you a better officer it will reflect in your performance report.

The other thing we need to do with our work force is sometimes we have groups we have to celebrate. One of the things that struck me about my visits, and the Secretary had the same experience when she visited the missile crews here recently, was a feeling that they don't think their job is important.

We talked about all those guiding concepts when I first started talking about this, all the things we've done over the last 70 years. There has been one constant during all those decades, and that's been the nuclear business and nuclear deterrence and the men and women who provide it. That has never changed. It's the wall paper of national security. We move all the icons around in front of it, we change things, we go with new ideas, but that nuclear backstop has always been there and it will be there in the foreseeable future. They're not important, they're critical to what we do as a nation. We've got to make sure they understand that.

By the way, we've got a lot of other great people in our Air Force. I'm not going to talk at length about it. I'm just going to give you a quick snapshot to each of these people who I've met sometime in the last few months.

This is "Iron" Min. Iron Min was born in Burma, Myanmar now. When he was 19 he won the lottery and their lottery was a trip to the U.S. He left his family behind, he came to the U.S., he was terrified. He weighed about 95 pounds. He was about 5'1". He's a little bitty guy. The first guy he saw at the processing center when he got off the boat was about 6'6", a big weight lifter. He didn't know what to do. So he worked as hard as he could. He learned English in about six months. He worked at every odd job you could think of. Finally he said I need an education, he went to a recruiter and joined the Air Force. He's a public health technician. By the way, a really good one. He's been the Airman of the Quarter a couple of times. He was Petersen Air Force Base's Airman of the Year. He was Air Force Space Command's Airman of the Year. Promoted to senior airman below the zone. This is one of those stories you only find in this country. You find a lot of them in our Air Force. You can count on this guy.

Rolland Holland is the mayor of Kandahar. He's a first lieutenant. He runs the largest single-runway military operation in the world. He's filling three captain's positions himself right now. He supports 380 airplanes, 37 different countries. Anything that happens in the planning on that airfield including the changeover plan to give part of it back to the Afghan government is being done by First Lieutenant Holland.

I didn't do these kinds of things when I was a first lieutenant. It's probably a good thing for the Air Force I didn't.

Kristina Wood just approved all the approaches. She developed, approved and got FAA certification for every instrument approach to all the new contingency bases that have sprung up in the Levant area, Jordan, et cetera, over the last few months. She's an Air Force air traffic controller. How does she know how to pull all those assets together? And she did it by herself. She was a one person deployed shop. You wonder why we succeed as an Air Force? It's not because of all of us in the front row it's because we've got all kinds of these people out running around our Air Force.

Dave Nelson runs all the crew chiefs. He's the aircraft -- the second chief up at Eielson Air Force Base. He has 42 crew chiefs working for him. Eielson grounded their airplanes for three months last year. When they came off the grounding, they planned to requalify their pilots. They thought it would take three months. When airplanes sit, they break. Everybody who flies them knows that. Everybody who fixes them knows that.

The first 188 sorties they had scheduled after the stand-down, 187 of them flew over mission effective. That's unbelievable. It's because this guy never quit working on them when everybody else was standing down. He kept doing maintenance, kept doing engine runs, kept doing everything he needed to do so the airplanes when they needed them would be ready to roll. Just in case they got the call. They retrained their whole crew force in 13 days, not in three months. Because of Dave Nelson.

Dan Osburn was the lead flight engineer on the C-17 program, the test program at Edwards. He's now the chief engineer on the F-35 test program at Edwards. He loves the Air Force. He's a great engineer. God put him in the perfect place.

Alex Nelson is a maintenance guy. He's a communication maintenance guy, the only communication maintenance squadron in the Air Force. He works at Creech Air Force Base. Alex Nelson is a genius. He's just very young. No one's made it formal yet, but I'm telling you he's a genius. When he went down range to Kandahar he took a look at the problems they'd been having for ten years with the communication links for the RPAs being flown from the States. The problems have been recurring. They're trying to fix them, blamed all kinds of different phenomena. He fixed them in three weeks. He found them all, he built a plan, convinced everybody he was right, they fixed them, they haven't recurred. This guy's brilliant. He's a Senior Airman.

Ariful Haque grew up in Bangladesh. When he was nine his grandmother and his hearing-impaired mother moved to the States to find a new life. He graduated from high school, he went to college, he got a degree and a master's degree and then he decided he needed to stand for something more than the private investigative work he

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was doing, which he liked, but he just didn't feel like he was standing for something so he went to a recruiter and enlisted in the Air Force. He's a fuel specialist. He was also Airman of everything, Senior Airman below the zone. He's thinking about becoming an officer. I'm thinking about just kind of advancing him to be Chief of Staff of the Air Force. [Laughter]. He's a smart kid. But he's as proud as anybody I've ever met in this business. He just loves being an American citizen. By the way, he's one of I think four or five people only so far who were actually given their citizenship the day they graduated from Basic Military Training.

Michael Hyland is a chemist. He actually worked in the Air Force Research Lab at Eglin. He does explosives kind of chemistry. Develops weapons of the future. He also deployed to Afghanistan and worked in an IED lab supporting NATO trying to figure out how to solve the IED problem. While he was there to understand the problem better he volunteered and was certified as a convoy driver. He has 25 convoy missions to his credit. He instructed chemistry at the Air Force Academy for a while as an assistant professor. He was the Instructor of the Year of the department which is a big award there. He was selected as a result of that to go get his PhD in some kind of chemistry. I'm not going to get it right so I'm not going to try and tell you.

By the way, I was going to tell you that the title of his thesis for his PhD, but there's no chance I can get that out. It has something to do with biomechanics, biophysics, biotrophics, something. He's brilliant. He's a great leader. He's a great person. He wants to experience things so he understands it so he can teach others, so he can take care of people. Mike Hyland has got a huge future in our Air Force and our Air Force has a huge future because Mike Highland's in it.

We've got people in other places who are doing these things and making them incredibly proud and they feel bad about being proud. I got a note from somebody who was at Red Flag not long ago and it said hey, somebody said we've got to get rid of this "Home of the Fighter Pilot" thing. Why? We've got room for pride in our Air Force. It's okay to be proud of your tribe, the people you grew up with, the mission set you came in with, who you love. We can still be Airmen first and be proud of who we are. What about the other side? What about at the front gate? There's room for a "home of the mobility pilot", there's room for a "home of the civil engineer," there's room for the "home of Red Horse" or "masters of space." There's room for all that in our Air Force. It's all about pride.

If people think we're taking it away, we'll lose them. That's why they stay.

I want to also mention strength of partnerships. Amy, are you here? Amy works for AFA. Amy used to work for our Air Force. She was an Air Reserve Technician. Her family's an Air Force family. Partnerships like this are important to us. Partnerships with industry, partnerships with congress, partnerships with OSD, partnerships with anybody we can partner with going forward so that we understand each other better, we

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can clearly explain our positions, that we can have discussions and don't get emotional quickly because there's no trust. Partnerships are part of success. Amy helps build one with us. Thank you.

We're working this week to try and start a new discussion with industry as well. We have to do better at this. I think it helps industry, it helps the Air Force. The Secretary's agreed to take this on. She'll be perfect with her background to lead this charge.

We do all kinds of partnerships with our allies. "Brusle" Sherburne is the middle right guy there. He's an exchange officer right now with the RAF at RAF Marham. He's in a tactical imagery intelligence wing. The last time they deployed to the desert as a detachment he actually went as detachment commander, the first time we've had a U.S. Airman do that. A great honor he was given by the RAF. There's a lot of trust being placed in him by the RAF as well, by the way. I don't blame them. He's a very talented guy.

When the Queen came to visit they asked "Brusle" to tell them about the operation. By the way, for those of you from the northeast, I heard that he offered to trade off Massachusetts for a knighthood. [Laughter]. That may be a rumor. He's building partnerships every single day with critical allies.

Probably our strongest professional inside the Air Force is Sid and JJ and I and the teams we are privileged to lead. And Roberto Amador is a guardsman. He works at March Air Force Base. Roberto is an imagery analyst. He works on RPAs, processing that take. This last year he figured out how to do that to support fires in the State of California. You read some of that with Predators orbiting over fires and helping direct activity. He's the guy who figured out how. He takes care of people all the time. All the time in all kinds of ways. He's been in the Santa Anna Police Department for 14 years. This is a guy you can trust. He'll be there when you need him.

Other people we can trust that we have to think about when we start talking about partnerships in our service. This is Secretary James' family. This is my Vice, Larry Spencer. I do nothing without Larry. I do nothing. Larry does everything. [Laughter]. It's a great setup. [Laughter]. This is Athena Cody, Chief Cody's wife, my wife Betty. They bring people together on different sides of the Air Force who don't come together normally, to look at problems that affect all of them. It's all part of partnership in terms of the team.

Then you've got people like this. You've got them in your family too. These are my kids. The things they put up with as we took them all over the world for all of these years, and they wouldn't change a thing today. Incredibly lucky to have them. They live in your house too.

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The last thing I want to mention is this. The Secretary's going to have a chance to talk to you much more a little bit about core values, about the effort that we've got going on in the Air Force and I don't want to get into that. I'll let her do that. I'll just say this. These core values are who we are. They're what we stand for. They're what this uniform represents. If there are people in our Air Force who don't think they stand for the same thing, if these don't represent their values, then they need to find another profession.

This is Tom Carr. He's a C-17 pilot. This is a cool picture, isn't it? It's what C-17 pilots do in the dark in Afghanistan. You know what I like about this, though? You probably can't see it as well as I can. He's got a really stylish mustache. [Laughter]. That I'm sure he grew while he was deployed. The reason I like this picture is because I was thinking about the last trip Chief Cody and I went on. I grew a little 'stache. [Laughter]. On the way back I wanted to change the look a little bit so I combed it out a little bit. [Laughter].

I started looking at these pictures and it reminded me that in just a few days it's March. I don't know, but I don't think we've ever had an all-in Mustache March, have we? So I'm putting the smack down on you guys. Air Force wide, Mustache March. MAJCOM competitions. [Laughter]. You identify your winners. We'll check the imagery and make sure it hasn't been doctored. We'll find the Air Force winner and I'll find a way to honor him. I'm assuming it's a him. There will be women who think they'll be left out of this, but that's not the case because the women in our Air Force have a critical role to play during Mustache March. Their job is to ridicule us non-stop about the idiotic look these mustaches will have on most of us as we try and look like Tom Selleck and really look like a three-haired mole. [Laughter].

One last photo. This is Callie Williams. Callie's six years old. She and a bunch of kids from her school were brought by their parents to Arlington Cemetery back in December to play in the Wreaths Across America effort, and they laid the wreaths at the headstones at Arlington, which is an unbelievable program. She is a remarkable six year old. Her parents are remarkable. And when she grows up she's going to be a remarkable young lady. And you represent everything that she will stand for.

Thank you for that. Thank you for your time today. Airpower. Because Callie deserves it. Thanks.

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