

**Remarks by Secretary Deborah Lee James at the
Swearing In of Gen. David L. Goldfein as Chief of Staff of the Air Force
Pentagon, Washington DC
1 July, 2016**

SECRETARY JAMES: Wow, standing room only. Well, I know why that is so because this is a really important day for all of us in the United States Air Force. It is an important day for all of us who contribute to the Joint Force, and to welcome everybody, the Airmen.

I look out in the audience, and wow, what a crowd we have here today. I'll just call out a few. Thank you for being with us, Secretary Fanning, General Selva, Ms. Gibbs, great to see you, Ms. Valentine, Mr. [inaudible], Chief Cody, Athena, thank you all for coming. I could go on and on. Everyone here is a distinguished visitor.

Of course, we are here today for a very important reason, and that is we are about to swear in our 21st Air Force Chief of Staff, General David Goldfein. [Applause] I'll come back to you in a minute, but there are some other important people that I have to thank and recognize, and that is we have members of the Goldfein family here today. First and foremost, thank you, Dawn, for your leadership, your service always to our United States Air Force throughout decades of service to us, so thank you. [inaudible]

We have Major General Retired Colby Goldfein, so we welcome you back to the Pentagon, sir, and Jeannie, thank you as well for being with us.

Now, of course today is just the first ceremony. Later on we are going to have a more formal ceremony to honor General Goldfein and his family, but we did want to have this ceremony today first and foremost because General, we need you to get to work. [Applause]

Just a few words about our General Goldfein. All of you know he is a battle tested pilot and as a combined Forces air component commander, he led our Middle East campaign during the period of 2011 to 2013, and as Director of the Joint Staff, Dave guaranteed many things, not the least of which

was the U.S.'s ability to defend our own lands, and he did this by helping to develop and provide strategic direction to the Joint Staff.

He also co-sponsored communication between the President, Secretary of Defense, the Unified Commands, and all of us at the Services. Then most recently as the Vice Chief of Staff, he has worked hand in hand not only with me, not only with General Welsh, but also with Ms. [Kidswells] on many, many matters to include budget and program matters. We kind of call that part of the job "death by Demag," and I'm sure that is a piece that you are not going to miss all that much.

Moving forward, of course, the Air Force is going to be relying on your determination, General Goldfein, to improve our readiness, to improve our modernization, and most importantly, always at the top of the list, taking care of our Airmen. I know also that Secretary Carter and Chairman Dunford are anxious to have you fully on board so they have your advice as a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Goldfein's proven performance, experience, and leadership qualities make him the right man at the right time for our Air Force.

General Goldfein and Dawn as well, on behalf of the entire Air Force family, we thank you for the fantastic service that you have both given to our nation, and becoming the Air Force Chief of Staff, the 21st Chief of Staff. As you know, it is a huge responsibility. It is also an honor, and it is also a great privilege.

I have every confidence that you are going to take our Air Force to new heights. Congratulations, and let's swear you in. [Applause]

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