Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III
Remarks - Air Force Association
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General Welsh: Thank you, Scott.

Thank you, folks. Thank you very much.

The 1:25 block is always exciting. There's actually some security there, because if I'm really bad you'll be asleep so fast you'll never know how bad it was. This is kind of nice. Hawk's got a 13 ounce coffee up here so he'll be my database.

Folks, it's just wonderful to be here with you today. Thank you so much to AFA for giving us this opportunity to come together. Thanks to our industry partners for taking the time to be here, for setting up downstairs, for being willing to discuss the future of our Air Force and of the technology that you make come to life so that we can use it on the battle space today and tomorrow. And then, of course, thanks to all our airmen who are here because you just rock. You really do. You just rock. [Applause].

There are a couple of special guests here today sitting up here in the front area. I'll introduce them as I go through, and of course there's "the" special guest, the boss is here, Secretary Debby James is with us. [Applause].

Let me tell you what I'd like to do today and this will probably panic the Secretary a little bit. I'm going to go to random thoughts. [Laughter]. It's about that time -- The Secretary just fell out of her chair up here in the front row thinking about the month that's approaching.

One of the great things about this job is you get to spend a lot of time talking to airmen. Every time about this year I start thinking about okay, what's the rest of this year going to look like? Where should I spend my time? Where should I focus? What should I be talking about mostly? And those kind of random thoughts are what I'm going to talk to you about a little bit today, and tell you where we are, where I think we're going, and the things we have to do to be successful going there.

But before I do that let me remind you gentlemen that Valentine's Day is two days away, so you still have time. There's 24 hours to think and then there's about 12 hours to panic, and then you're there. [Laughter].

But I want to take this opportunity to very publicly thank my Valentine for everything that she does for me, for our Air Force, for our Air Force families. Betty, you are absolutely

unbelievable. Thank you for everything you do. Happy Valentine's Day. [Applause].

By the way, I also wanted to show you this photo which proves definitively that she is an angel. [Laughter].

I think for the last couple of years our airmen and our Air Force to some extent have kind of felt like number 12. There have been lots of distractions. There's been sequestration, there have been furloughs, there's been talk about retirement plans and compensation packages and how much am I going to get paid, and what's happening to my health care. It is this unending stream of things that have kind of grabbed our consciousness, and while we continue to fight the fight really well when we're deployed, and the folks who support it from home station focus all day long on the fight and do fantastic work, as soon as you step away from that environment or you redeploy, the conversations turn to this stuff. That's just what's been happening.

Chief Cody and I, Secretary James, have the privilege of traveling all over our Air Force, and when we ask at all calls everywhere for questions about anything airmen want to talk about, they don't want to talk about new radars for their aircraft, operational questions. They don't want to talk about new tool kits, better ways of doing the job. They want to talk about all that stuff I've just been mentioning.

We're distracted, folks. And for a military service this can be a problem if it continues over time. So I want us to take a lesson from this guy. That's Betty and I's son Matt. He's an infantry officer in the Marine Corps and he is a meathead. [Laughter]. He's a loveable meathead. Matt doesn't have a problem with focus. Ever. I asked Matt about focus, thinking about this talk, and I said how do you keep your marines focused, Matt? You guys have some pretty tough training venues. You're in the field a lot. It's got to be hard to keep their attention. He goes they're all over the map until I say it's time to go to work. He said, then they focus instantly. I said well what is it that allows them to do that? Is it tactics you teach them, is it -- What is it? He said dad, actually, my Marines and I aren't that complex. He said, tactics aren't a real big deal for us. He said they go like this. If the enemy approaches, we attack. If the enemy retreats, we attack. If we ambush the enemy, we attack. If we're ambushed, we attack. He said, we got this. [Laughter]. My marines believe in this tactic, and he said all I tell them is that we are going to overwhelm the enemy with firepower and fury. They're focused. The Corps is good at this. And I think we can take a lesson from it.

So here's what I think the Air Force needs to do in 2015. I think we need to refocus on the things that really matter to us as members of this service and this profession. I think we have to start with a refocus on our mission and our primary job which is to fight and win the nation's wars. All that other discussion will still happen. We'll still include our airmen in it, but that shouldn't be the focus of every conversation that we have. This should be.

We can't afford to ever forget that airmen are still, right now as we sit here, engaged in very real and very dangerous operations in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Syria, in Africa, even in Eastern Europe. Airmen still stand ready on the Korean Peninsula 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Airmen still sit all over this great country and bring the incredible technology that many of you enable in space and cyber to benefit warfighters around the clock, all over the world. Airmen in the Air National Guard here in this country still stand strip alert to conduct air defense missions in defense of the homeland. And right now in February's frozen missile fields, airmen are defending this nation's very existence.

We can't afford to forget that. That should be the focus of our efforts day to day.

This picture happens every day all over the world all the time. Most people are not lucky enough to ever see it for real. We're privileged today because there's somebody up here sitting near the front row, where'd you go Crash? Who was sitting in that airplane somewhere in the Middle East the night of the first F-22 raid in history. Because he led the first F-22 combat sortie.

Crash doesn't have trouble with focus either, and Crash's life is pretty simple according to him. He has to do three things. He has to be a capable and credible fighter pilot, because that's his job in the Air Force. He has to lead and motivate the airmen who are following him to be able to take his job some day. And he believes he has to find and demonstrate the proper balance between his profession and his family. Crash has figured this out. His focus is clear. He is unbelievably good at what he does professionally as they demonstrated on that first night of F-22 combat operations. This is Crash's job.

My goal for 2015 is to be as good at mine as he is at his. I think we should all take that on.

We've also been refocusing on our core values. We've kind of been reminded that if these three simple words with elegant meaning, if they're really going to be foundational values for our service then they have to be cared for and sustained. They

have to be discussed. They have to be embraced over and over and over again.

We're in a discussion right now with our airmen about should we add respect as a fourth core value? Leaders of our Air Force, officer, enlisted, civilian, everyone has strong opinions on this, on both sides. So do former leaders of our Air Force. So do former members of our Air Force. So do our airmen. And the voice that we're trying to get right now is all those airmen of today. What do they think about this? Not just what do we think they think about this.

So this conversation will go on here in the near future. Somebody who figured this out a long time ago and never changed is Julia Jefferson. Julia's sitting right here. Would you kind of wave at the crowd there Julia? Julia's a squadron commander of the 902nd Security Forces Squadron, Joint Base Randolph Lackland down in San Antonio. Or Joint Base San Antonio we call it now, right? I'll get it right.

Julia's a pretty special lady. I first met Julia in Kunsan Air Base in 1997. We were in the base gym one morning. I was doing sets on the bench with, I don't know, 250, 275. [Laughter]. Actually Julia was doing sets on the bench with 250 because she was a big body builder, a power lifter. Julia wasn't lifting weights, she was pounding weights. I was taking a nap on the weight bench which is a very different form of exercise.

She had her personal trainer with her, I thought. A fairly fit looking guy who it turns out was Chief Master Sergeant Lynn Jefferson. His tactical call sign was Sugar Daddy. He's sitting right next to her. Because Chief Jefferson wasn't really her personal trainer, he was her husband and her role model and her mentor.

At that time Julia was a staff sergeant in our Air Force, a young security forces defender and a very proud one. She served in the enlisted ranks for 13 years; was commissioned in 2002; and she's been an officer for the last 12. But the day she walked into this business, Julia Jefferson came in the door because she wanted to make a difference. She wanted to stand for something important. She wanted to represent ideals. She wanted to take care of people, both physically and virtually. She wanted to be someone they turned to and could count on, and she's been all of that from the day she walked in the door through the time I met her to today. She's remarkable. There is nobody better suited to lead our airmen.

By the way, like this PJ, Julia just guessed that it's not about being a professional only. It's about being a member of the

profession of arms. This is a different business. It's an ugly business sometimes and somebody's got to be good at it. And the people who are need leaders who care. People who understand this isn't like working in a cafeteria or working a counter at the dry cleaner or at the bank. All those jobs are great. They're not what we do. And everything we teach in terms of those core values -- leadership, supervision -- has to be in context of the profession of arms.

The first time I saw this picture I said I'm never going to forget it. Everything I want to know about our Air Force is captured right there. It's also captured in that major sitting right there in the second row.

We're in the middle of standing up a new profession of arms Center of Excellence at AETC. The boss has given us the head nod. General Rand is putting it together. It will be led by the AETC staff and we'll have direct authority to liase with the Chief of Staff from now and forever so that we can make this the keeper of the flame and get this concept into every PME course, every training venue, every discussion we have as Squadron Commander's Courses, Group Commanders Courses, Wing Commanders Courses, Chief Master Sergeant training courses. All the way down to supervisory level training. We can't lose sight of this.

It would make it easier if we all knew Julia, because then we could just be like her.

It's a beautiful picture, isn't it? About 30-35 percent of that globe is covered by land where my son Matt and the United States Army and all of our great battlefield airmen can dominate the enemy. About 70 percent of it's covered by sea where our unbelievable Navy will dominate the enemy. And every centimeter of it is covered by air and surrounded by space where you operate. I won't even begin to figure out how to determine how much terrain is in the cyber environment that surrounds all that.

This is our AOR. It's awesome. And our Air Force is awesome. But any weapon, no matter how technically proficient, no matter how functionally advanced or functionally capable, can be too small to accomplish its desired purpose. And so can air forces.

Most of you remember Desert Shield and Desert Storm. When we deployed in 1990 to that conflict, the United States Air Force had 188 fighter squadrons. 188. In the FY16 budget we'll go to 49. 188 to 49. We had 511,000 active duty airmen in 1990. We now have 313,000 -- that's 40 percent smaller. Forty percent.

There is no excess capacity anymore. There is no bench to go to in the Air Force. Everything is committed to the fight.

I'd love to be able to tell you that that much smaller force is more modern, more capable, younger, but I can't.

Back when we were flying in Desert Storm we never really talked about using the B-17 to bomb Baghdad. That never came up in the conversation. It's ludicrous, isn't it? You know, if we had used the B-17 in the first Gulf War it would have been five years younger at that time than the B-52, the KC-135 and the U-2 are today.

We have 12 fleets of airplanes. Fleets of airplanes that quality for antique license plates right here in the great State of Florida. We have four fleets of airplanes that qualify for this great organization. [Laughter]. Which I am not endorsing, personally or professionally. [Laughter].

We must modernize the Air Force. This isn't optional. We must do it. And it will be painful because we have to make very difficult choices to get the money inside our top line at current funding levels to do it.

This is another way of looking at age of a fleet. We'll compare it to another Air Force. Just for grins, we'll pick this one. Those bars are age of particular parts of our fleet. The really bad news about this chart is all those black bars on the top half are moving further to the right as we speak. The bars on the bottom half are all moving to the left.

If you compare apples to apples it looks like this. A J-10 fleet that's five years old, an F-16 fleet that's 24 years old.

Let me talk about it this way. That's the Air Force car there. The 43 car wearing Air Force paint, isn't that cool? Four laps before this picture was taken, the 43 car had a 45 car length lead. For the last couple of laps the 41 and the 55 car have been steadily closing, the gap's shrinking. Just like our technology gap, just like our capacity gap is shrinking. When do we get to the point here where no matter how fast 43 tries to accelerate, the momentum gained by 41 and 55 puts them in the lead. That's the game we're playing.

It's a tough game. Maybe a dangerous one.

So for the last couple of years we've been trying to reset some things. Not because they're broken, not because we're not doing great work, but because we need to reset some things. We've done this before.

After World War I we came out, the Army Air Corps, talking about the advantages of aviation and what can we use it for. The big lessons were reconnaissance, you can see the enemy. The other lessons were pursuit. You can shoot the enemy's airplanes down so they can't see you. Or you can shoot their balloons down so they can't observe you. So pursuit and reconnaissance were the big lessons of the inter-war period, and as World War II approached we just really started to get serious about really bombing, getting more proficient in the bombing business.

But then we went into World War II and the lesson of strategic bombardment kind of became clear. And we came out of World War II with this idea that strategic bombardment was the future of air forces, and we shifted and focused in that direction, and except for a tactical diversion in Korea, really all the way up until the late 1960s and early 1970s, we focused on building the best strategic Air Force we could with Curtis LeMay, Bernie Schriever and others building this incredibly, incredibly capable nuclear enterprise that has been the wallpaper of our national security ever since. We've been leaning back on it for years and years and years. And we're still leaning back on it.

Then in 1973 we came out of the Vietnam conflict and said you know, tactically, some of that didn't go so well. We better rethink how we fight the tactical fight. How we train and things like Red Flag, and we put new energy into this area and we got really really good as a tactical Air Force along with that great strategic Air Force. Then 1990 came and we made Operation Desert Storm look ridiculously easy. It wasn't that easy, but we were that good. And that large.

And then for the last 25 years we've been fighting a different type of enemy, kind of a shadowy enemy. It's harder to pin down, harder to isolate, more of a counterinsurgency supporting role for the Air Force. We revolutionized and gave birth to an entirely new generation of ISR and a new understanding of how it can be used. Where we've come in the last 25 years in ISR is stunning.

We operationalized space capabilities. We jumped into the cyber domain. But it's been about 25 years and that's about the cycle for these resets. It's time to do it again.

What's next for the Air Force? That's what we've been looking at.

A couple of areas we think we have to specifically reset. Infrastructure. We spent a lot of time lately taking money out of this to pay for operational activity as our budgets were stressed, but there is infrastructure in our Air Force which

creates mission capability. I'll refer to it as critical mission infrastructure. This isn't something you can just not build another dorm and it won't hurt you over time. Your people just won't like the old room. This is stuff that will keep you from developing combat capability. IT's test facilities, training ranges. It's simulation infrastructure, education infrastructure, nuclear infrastructure, stuff that we cannot do without. We have got to get back to a persistent, consistent investment and this kind of infrastructure or our Air Force will break ten years from now. And the boss is leading the charge on this.

There's a lot of talk in the press lately about space launch. We do a lot more than space launch in the space business. We had another great launch last night though, by the way. Brigadier General Nina Amagno and the Chief and the whole team at Patrick, the 45th Space Wing, had another great success last night, which they tend to do with regularity, along with the SpaceX partners. It's beautiful. It's really exciting. But it's not where the meat and potatoes of space operations lives.

In the space arena we're reset a couple of things, and we is a big term. I'll take no credit. Let me point to John Hyten and his team and the Secretary and the acquisition development team that supports her.

There are three things that we're resetting a little bit here. The first one is something that John has led the effort on, and it's the discussion of space as a warfighting domain. We don't want to fight a war kinetically in space. But we can certainly not afford to acknowledge the fact that others are posturing to be able to do just that. And we either adjust to that or we face the consequences.

Our vision of space superiority as a mission is evolving. Space situational awareness, while critically important to that particular mission, is not sufficient in and of itself. Not anymore. Now you have to be able to survive in space. Resiliency is critical. The way you put that together with space situational awareness will determine if you are able to provide either locational or situational superiority in space in the future. And John and his team are all over it.

What that means from a broader sense in my mind, is that we have to make sure the Air Force continues to be the lead operational voice in discussions about the space domain in the nation. Because nobody knows this operational domain better than the United States Air Force does. And that's the task John has taken on.

The Secretary has helped us by energizing the Executive Agency for Space in a major way. She and her team are intimately involved in every detail of it. Air Force Space Command will be the same thing on the operational side.

Cyber's no different. We're understanding the domain in new and different ways.

Mark works at 24th Air Force. He works in defensive cyberspace operations. He's brilliant, he's innovative, he's smart, he has a different view of the world. Our networks are attacked thousands of times every day. The folks at 24th Air Force manage and operate command and control for that defense through a number of different tools. One of them is a tasking order, a defensive cyberspace operations tasking order.

Mark figured out how to automate that. It was an intensively difficult process. Lots of man hours required. He's now got an automated database that tracks execution, allows changes in execution, allows us to assess success, allows us to develop lessons learned, pull data for metrics. All the things that will continue to make this process better and better.

Drive, developed, implemented, executed day to day by Staff Sergeant Mark Fraley.

This is the kind of reset we need. Mark uses terms that are understandable to everybody else in the Air Force. He talks about the tasking order. He talks about interdiction. He talks about ISR and cyber. He talks about defensive fires. He doesn't use technical terms. He talks Air Force terms. This is the reset. It will make it real to all of us.

The missile business, you've heard a lot about it, but I'll tell you there's a lot of work being done by General Sevvie Wilson, General Jack Weinstein, the commanders at all of our nuclear bases, both ICBM and bomber. People who put together the force improvement program. All the people that participated in gathering data for it.

Tracy was one of those people. Tracy's a missile crew member. She's actually an ops evaluator at Malmstrom Air Force base which means that professionally she's in about the top .5 percent of her peer group. That's not bad.

Tracy's also a mom. She has a three year old and another one on the way. She contributes in very meaningful ways to this force improvement program activity. She's considered by the wing commander at Malmstrom the go to company grade officer in that

wing. And she's his first choice to go to the next Weapons School class.

This is an astonishingly capable young professional. Everybody who knows her will tell you she's happy all the time. She's a great mom. She's a great wife. She loves her family. Like Crash and Julia, she's kind of figured this out. So my goal for 2015 is to find her balance and get it into my life. She's just better than I am so I haven't figured it out yet. But I'm chasing her. You should be too.

The total force effort's been going on for a couple of years now. In the Air Force. We are absolutely committed to creating a fully integrated operationally relevant and capable total force. One Air Force. One of the people who's been absolutely essential to that effort is in the room today and he's retiring in a couple of months and I wanted to acknowledge him. Buddy Titshaw, would you please stand up? Buddy Titshaw is the TAG of the State of Florida and when I ask for -- [Applause]. When I asked for help from the TAGs to figure out how we can come together and do this in a more meaningful way, Buddy was the first guy to put his hand in the air. He's been part of every POM briefing, every budget briefing to the Secretary. He has a seat at the table and a voice in the conversation. He advises the people doing the total force planning on the Air Staff. He advises Sid Clarke in his job as the Director of the Air National Guard. He's someone Sid can call if he needs help or a sounding board. He's an honest, straightforward voice. He represents the states' interests; he represents the Air Force's interests; and he can explain pros and cons of every position. He's what we need in this conversation, and Buddy I just wanted to publicly thank you. You have made a huge difference over your remarkable career to this state and the airmen and soldiers who serve in the Guard, and you've made a remarkable difference to our Air Force. We're going to miss you, Bud. [Applause].

We also need to reset this, and it's more of a reset I think of our self-image as the leading service proponent of innovation. We were born from it. It should be in our DNA and I think it is. We're just kind of hesitant to brag about it.

Let's talk this up. Every airman should be, can be, I believe must be innovative if we're to succeed in the future. Commanders can't be intimidated by that. Supervisors shouldn't be scared of it. We ought to be embracing it.

Then those airmen that get a little bit too excited about it, we've got to remind them that it has to be bounded by common sense. It has to be bounded by the really hard won knowledge that there are some things that have to be done a certain way at

certain times. But that doesn't mean we can't be innovative within those systems or those mission areas. Let's face it, some people just are innovative.

Now you guys know this but I didn't. This is a robber fly. When I look at this I see a bug. When Dr. Jennifer Tally sees it, stand up for a second and wave at the crowd. When Jennifer Tally sees this, she sees a flying sensor suite. Fascinating concept when you think about it, isn't it? I never would have thought about it but it was fascinating when she told me.

What Jennifer does, she works at the Air Force Research Lab in the Munitions Directorate. She works at Eglin Air Force Base and she works in the Bio Sensor Lab. Jennifer is the first person in her family to have a PhD. Hers is in neuro ethology. Now those of you who don't know what that is can talk to Frank Gorenson on the break. [Laughter]. Frank told me he's been doing a little work in this area, Jennifer, which means it must have something to do with cheese. [Laughter].

Jennifer spent some time after she graduated from her doctoral program as a fellow working at the Research Lab and then came on board as a civilian airman to continue this work because it excites her. It's challenging, and the potential for the future is incredible.

There she is. Looks intense, doesn't she? She's really not. She's a sweetheart. You need to come meet her afterwards. But don't engage in any really deep conversations. You'll feel silly. [Laughter].

Here's what she does. She looks at those things on the left like an RPA and she goes you know, they're sensor poor and they're processing rich. Then she looks at that robber fly and goes, well that can't process anything, that dude, but he's got sensors everywhere. Why don't we take advantage of that in the United States Air Force?

So what she does is she tries to figure out all those sensors on that robber fly and a couple of others and she compares them to each other to try and figure out how do they sense this way? So that she can develop hardware and software solutions for future robots so that they can sense the environment they're operating in in a better way and therefore perform in a better way in that environment. It's really a remarkable set of things that she's involved in. This is the future. People will live and die -- live on the good side, die on the bad side -- because Jennifer Tally figured this out for us. She will make conflicts shorter so fewer people die overall. Or maybe she can give us the

capability to prevent them completely, which would be the best result of all.

Jennifer, thanks for inspiring us. Thanks for letting us use your brain. Thanks for being excited about this work. And thanks for seeing the connection between this incredible theory and a practical application. Because some of the industry folks in here would have figured it out, [but there isn't] anybody up here in a uniform on the front row who would have done this, so thanks for your help. It's really an honor to have you here today. [Applause].

But this innovation stuff's a little risky. Wesley May completed the first in-flight refueling in November of 1921. He got his buddy Frank to hop in his Lincoln standard bi-plane and fly him out over Los Angeles. He climbed out of the back cockpit up on the wing with a five gallon can of gasoline on his back. He crawled out the right wing, stood up, grabbed the loop on the bottom of his buddy Earl's Curtis Jenny, climbed up on that wing, walked over and poured gas in Earl's gas tank. Innovative. Stupid, but innovative. [Laughter].

But if you don't have a plan it's even more risky. Luckily, we've got a plan. Let me talk you briefly through it. You don't have to read anything on these things, I'll just tell you what they are.

The top thing's our vision. It's who we would like to be some day. It's something that just keeps calling us forward.

The document on the left is Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power. It's what we do for America.

The document on the top right is a call to the future. So it's the lead document in our strategic document series and it's who we are going to be 20 years from now.

The document in the middle is the new Air Force concept of operations. It's how we're going to operate once we get to that point. It gives us a target. It gives us a concept of how capabilities will fit together.

The bottom right is our new single Air Force master plan that will be finished here in about a month. It's the game plan to make those other two things it's linked to there a reality.

In the far bottom are all the different flight plans that support individual program and technology development to make it reality.

All that sounds cool, but if you don't have a way of connecting all that and watching it day to day and making decisions to support it, it's just a bunch of pretty paper.

Here's the process, and you don't have to know any of the words on this either. Let me just tell you what it is. This is the decision road map. We're following it religiously. It's a series of decisions, meetings that lead to decisions. Forums with the senior leaders of the Air Force giving guidance at the front end of the process instead of the Chief and Secretary go do's is the last thing in the process. Everything above the top third line there is looking 30 years and out on the left side, 20 years and out in the middle, and 10 years and out on the right side. The middle and bottom rows are all the technical stuff that has to happen to turn that into a product that disappears and goes into the POM cycle.

But our focus and the Air Force senior decision-making process is now on the top line, not on the bottom two lines. This is a fundamental change and we'll see if we have the discipline to stick with it.

The problem is that we have lots of other processes out there that aren't connected fully to it yet, and that's what's got to happen over the next year. Everything that's an idea, a prioritization scheme, a proposal, has got to come into this process on that top line or it's disconnected. And anything that's disconnected should be thrown away because it doesn't connect to those plans I just mentioned. We don't have money to keep doing stuff that isn't connected.

We're missing something, though, and that's something that we used to have. Many of you are familiar with developmental planning, especially those of you in industry, and the Air Force Systems Command used to be the home of developmental planning, and it was a way of just looking down the road, considering all the things that are in the circle of that key -- the world environment, the strategies you have, the threat that's emerging, the programs you have, different concepts of operations, emerging technology, cost and cost curves, all the metrics that we pursue and trying to decide, after considering all that, where are the gaps and shortfalls in our capability development plan over the next 30 years? What are we missing? We kind of let this go away when Systems Command went away. We have pockets of it, but institutionally we gave it away.

We have to bring it back. So after we consider all that and do the developmental planning, we identify those gaps and shortfalls and then we have a decision to make on that decision tree I showed you before as to whether we want to go do planning for

development in those areas or whether we should accept the risk because it's too expensive.

Or should we take a program that's currently intended to do it that's failing and just terminate it, instead of continuing it for ten more years? And reinvest that money in a new approach to solve the same problem. It's a constant relook at the issues that affect you over time.

For example, if we decide we have a shortfall in suppression of enemy air defenses, we would then stand up a capability collaboration team led by Air Combat Command probably. With representatives from all over the Air Force. They would look at different options for dealing with that shortfall at whatever point it occurs in the future. And it could be some kind of netted infrastructure. It could be nano-technology as an application to suppress enemy sensors or communication. It could be hypersonics to develop weapons to shut it down before our aircraft get in range. Or it could be autonomous activity by some new RPA in the future that senses things in a way that we couldn't before because some stupid fly gave us an idea of how to do it right. And then behaves because the sensing is better in a way that helps solve this problem.

But we look at those options and then we make decisions as to how do we transition those ideas into programs of record, or into concepts that are different than the ones we had in the past. But all the inputs from this go back into that decision cycle. So we make a corporate decision to prioritize the fund or not.

We do the same thing with things like technology demonstrations when we find gaps in science and technology for the future. It may be laser applications of directed energy. It may be new engine technology. It may be that same hypersonics test program.

But the thing we haven't done well that developmental planning will do for us is it will allow us to now plan for success. Typically we will wait to see if that directed energy test works. When it does we didn't start talking about okay, what can we really do with this and where do we find money and how do we start a requirements process and that takes time. Industry is behind the power curve because we haven't told you what we plan to do if it wins. If it's successful, where are we going with this?

So you have to wait until we kind of make up our mind and give you a plan so you can't energize your resources, your thinking to help us get ahead of this curve. We're not talking to you about it. We must do that. You should be part of this transition planning. You should be part of the CCT process in developmental

planning. And if we know that directed energy program is scheduled to report something out in 2018 then we should plan for success.

Set resources aside. Have a game plan so we can immediately invest and exploit the success the program just gave us. Create a strategic pivot point for ourselves. Don't wait for one to open the door and beat us in the face. We've got to think differently about planning long range and then take all that stuff we learned, reinsert it in that top line, make new decisions about resources, and then go back and adjust all these things. We'll change all the ones in the top half of the page every four years. The master plan will be updated every two years. Those others will be reviewed every two years. Then a ten year budget will fall out the bottom that will update every year.

That's the strategic planning process. We're into it. It's helping us now tell the story in a clearer, more coherent and consistent way, and we're going to have to keep pushing for this over time.

Okay, let me close here with two slides.

The first one is just kind of an acknowledgement. Where's Brad? General Brad Heithold is Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command, and he's going to get very serious shortly about making a lot of public proclamations and announcements about this year being the Year of the Air Commando. And I just can't imagine a better thing to celebrate.

This community inside the Air Force has been more stressed than any other over the past 15 years. They have sacrificed more than any other. They have dealt with the pain and trauma of war more than any other. And they have been unbelievably successful in doing that.

Nate, can I ask you to start making your way up here? Do you need Betty to help you roll?

Let me introduce you to one of those air commandos. I'm going to pause just a second while he gets here, and we're also going to try and save his wife who has their daughter Evie in the back right now, who's unbelievably cute.

Hey, buddy, thanks for coming up.

This is Nate Nelson. Nate started his life in the Air Force -- [Applause]. Nate started life in the Air Force as a young enlisted intelligence specialist. Decided to try to become

commissioned. He was commissioned and became an intelligence officer. He spent his time as an officer working in the special tactics community, most of it with the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron out at Joint Base Lewis McCord. Nate was on his third combat deployment when he was hit by rocket fire and was severely injured.

This is Jen, Nate's wife. [Applause]. Nate loved what he did in the Air Force. He still loves what he did in the Air Force. I first met these two along with Betty in the hospital at Walter Reed when Nate had just arrived back in the States. Jen was by his side. Betty and I had the opportunity to meet Jen when she was six months pregnant with this beautiful little girl that Betty's hauling in here who Jen may not get back from my wife. [Laughter]. I think she'll like the bright lights. She's kind of a ham.

We actually met them right after Jen had come from a meeting with the doctors who had just described to her the injuries from their perspective after their kind of detailed review, it was after he'd gotten to Walter Reed, and explained the paralysis that was from his chest down, was likely not to go away completely. And that this was something they were going to have to start therapy on and get him used to living with this. Nate does have some movement, as you can see in his hands and arms, but the paralysis has remained.

So they had just heard this information when Betty and I walked in the room and said hi. She told us that's what she'd just heard and you could see the impact kind of hit her as she was describing it to us. And I will never forget her response to this because all she said, she said it twice by the way, she turned to Nate and she said, "We've got this." And then she turned around, and I think talking to herself said again, "We've got this." I'll never forget it. [Applause].

And now they've got this. A beautiful little girl who kind of brings sunshine into their hearts, into their home and into every life she touches, is my guess after meeting her this morning.

Jen is now the Hurlburt Field Military Spouse of the Year for her platform on marriage resiliency and her work as a health care provider to her daughter and her husband during this last horrible year and a half in their life. Both of them are looking forward. Nate's trying to get back into the intelligence business working for the Air Force either at AFSOC or one of the special tactics squadrons. As you can see from the photo that was up there, he recently got back into hunting. He likes to hunt. He'd like to get into that business for the Air Force. The two of them are still a beautiful, young, vibrant Air Force

couple. And now they're training either a space operator or a cyber warrior or an FX pilot for the future. The only thing I know that is going to happen in this family is that they're going to care for each other. I know they're going to keep loving each other and I know this guy will continue to serve as long as we allow him to, and I'd just like all of us to say thanks. [Applause].

Folks, every now and then I think it's important that we just take a deep breath, we step back, especially those of us who have been doing this a long time, and we just look at our Air Force. They're unbelievable. They're just unbelievable. All of them. Please thank them for me. [Applause].

Thanks for everything you do. Thanks for your time this morning. Please come up and say hi to these guys. I'll look forward to seeing you --

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