

## **AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION BREAKFAST**

**Remarks by General David Goldfein**

**Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force**

**Washington, D.C.**

**26 July 2017**

GENERAL GOLDFEIN: Thank you, sir. I got to remember to keep you on retainer for my obituary someday. So, I really do want to say thanks and appreciate the time this morning to talk about our Air Force as we continue to celebrate 70 years of breaking barriers. And a special thank you to the Air Force Association because you support us in so many ways across so many areas.

So, this morning I made a cup of coffee in the same kitchen where Hap and Bea Arnold made their coffee in the Air House. So, that history is never lost on me as the 21st Chief of Staff. In fact, given all the residents of the Air House at Ft. Meyer, I can tell you on occasion, Dawn and I hear footsteps in the attic and smell the faint odor of Corona cigars and we're pretty sure that Kurt LeMay is stomping around in the attic checking on us. I think Hap and Kurt would be pretty proud of their legacy and where we are today as an Air Force that defends the homeland, owns the ultimate high ground and projects power abroad with our allies and partners.

So, we certainly have our challenges and I'll talk about a few of these but we are also presented unlimited opportunities. As I stand before you this morning, I am more confident and excited about our future in the next 70 years than I have ever been in my career. This is an incredible time for the nation's lead Airmen and it is an honor every day to serve. And one reason for my optimism, among the many, is the opportunity to work side by side with Dr. Heather Wilson.

This past weekend, I had a great conversation with General retired Tom Moorman who was the commander of Air Force Space Command during the Desert Storm, the first space war. He said, you know if we were to script out the perfect background for an Air Force secretary, I don't think we could ever do better than Heather Wilson. Air Force Academy graduate, Rhodes Scholar, time on the National Security Council, Congresswoman from a state heavily invested in nuclear technology, with time on the Intelligence Committee, entrepreneur and business leader and president of a major STEM university involved in game changing research. We won the lottery. In addition to a great resume, she's also a wonderful leader and a good person who truly and deeply cares about our Airmen and our Air Force. So, she and I follow a long line of secretary and chief executive teams. So, the era of Wilson and Goldfein has begun. Fight's On!

Let me recap from my last presentation here and set the table for the discussion. I've come to believe there are five key attributes of future conflict that we must prepare for as a service that both leads and supports joint operations.

So, as a quick refresher first, future conflict will be trans-regional.

Doggone-it, our adversaries are not paying attention to our combatant commander maps. Today, EUCOM commander General Scaparrotti is not the only COCOM that drives to work thinking about Russia. Russia is a EUCOM, AFRICOM, PACOM, NORTHCOM, CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM, STRATCOM challenge. And as the service that brings global vigilance and global reach and global power it's absolutely essential that we continue to think and operate globally.

It will be multi-domain.

We sense the global in a sensor grid that involves six domains: air, land, sea, space, cyber, and I add a sixth, under sea, and victory in my mind, will go to the nation who can take all the ones and zeros collected across this grid and turn them into a common operational picture and decision speed in order to overwhelm any adversary by creating effects from these same domains.

It will be multi-component.

We are more interdependent on each other as services than we've been in our history. For 26 years of continuous combat since Desert Storm, we've produced a truly joint team that excels in simultaneous combat, where we often focused on sequential and deconflicted operations in the past.

It will be multi-national.

Our greatest strategic advantage in any future conflict are our allies and partners. Simply put, we have them, our adversaries don't. If President Putin crosses a line, he knows he faces the collective economic and military might of 29 nations in the greatest alliance in history. A nuclear alliance, I might add. So, we must advance our ability to fight together in an age when information sharing is vital to success

And it will be fast.

We've had the luxury over the last 16 years in the Middle East, of having rather significant control over the rheostat -- the pace of conflict. Think about this. We've actually been able to announce the time and the place of operations, months prior, against an enemy that could actually not thwart our intentions. I don't believe future conflict is going to afford us that luxury.

So, it is against this backdrop, these five attributes of future conflict, that Secretary Wilson and I will be publishing a paper in the next couple of weeks laying out five priorities that will drive us over the remainder of our tenure together. They support a single objective that was given to us by Secretary Mattis. Increase lethality. Pretty clear commander's intent.

So, priority one is to restore our readiness.

Secretary Wilson and I believe a laser focus on revitalizing squadrons, healthy squadrons and squadron like organizations -- the heartbeat of the Air Force -- is absolutely central to this effort. It is the level of the command where the mission of the Air Force succeeds or fails. Where command teams have the most impact on our airmen and their families. It is where we generate and sustain readiness. Often it is where innovation starts. So, we have a dedicated team led by Brigadier General S.L. Davis out visiting bases, 17 of 23 already completed, to get hands-on no kidding assessments of just what the state of our squadrons are and where they need the most assistance. We're gaining manpower. Our end strength is finally on the rise with manpower targeted for First Sergeants and Commander Support Staffs. And perhaps most importantly, we're pushing decision authority back down to squadron commanders, as a warfighting imperative, to improve our operational agility. As I tell commanders at every level, I trust you completely, don't wait for me.

Priority two is a cost effective modernization.

We must continue to transition quickly from an industrial age model of acquisition to an information age model. While wars of the past have been about attrition, wars of the future will be about cognition. We've got to focus not on the truck but on the highway they ride on. Our first question in any acquisition program of the future is not going to be what can it do; our first question will be how does it connect. I liken this to the Rubik's cube. The center is the network with common data standards so information can flow at the speed of light. Every colored square on the outside represents the capability. They're not all blue, by the way -- multi-component. The opportunity to smartly modernizing for information of warfare is about the ability to have an infinite number of combinations available to cause multiple simultaneous dilemmas for our adversaries at a speed they can never counter. In my mind, this is 21st century deterrents. Brigadier General "Salty" Saltzman is leading a team today performing a yearlong analysis of the future of multi-domain command and control. Conducting experiments with what we call data to decision. Seeking the best ways to fuse multiple sources of information into a common operating picture for leadership. We're assigning pathfinders to think through it faster and a more agile acquisition process in the information age.

Our third priority is to innovate for the future and take advantage of where industry is going as space becomes profitable. SpaceX, developing reusable rockets. Virgin galactic, developing low cost access to space. The future is absolutely wide open. And it is my belief that we will be fighting in and from space in future conflicts. We as a service have got to lead this transition. I could go on forever about exciting technologies with military applications and maybe we can get into some of those during Q&A. Uber, Moon Express, hypersonics, directed energy, nano computing, big data. This is not Buck Rogers stuff of the distant future, it's here or just around the corner.

Priority four is to strengthen how we develop airmen and future leaders.

There is a personal story I'll share with you that frames how I think about this. In my first meeting with my new boss when I was the Air Component Commander in Central Command, then General Mattis, shook my hand and informed me that I was his Space Coordinating Authority. Of course. I was his lead Airmen. Our joint teammates actually don't

know or care what our badges mean on our uniforms. They are important to us, but not to them. What they see is blue and they see the tape that says United States Air Force and the expectation is that we come to the table understanding the operational art of air, space and cyber operations and how they are nested with a broader set of military capabilities to create effects. Multi-domain, multi-component and multi-national.

So, we have a team lead by Brigadier General Brian Killough and Chief Ron Thompson who are working on joint development models that start at the Academy and ROTC for officers and tech school for our NCO's and continue throughout a career. We're looking at our incentive structure to ensure duty in Air Operations Centers, where the operational art is practiced daily, is competitive duty for promotion. We're rebuilding Joint Task Force capacity beginning with 9th Air Force at Shaw Air Force Base to ensure we have certified JTF offerings to Combatant Commanders to respond to crisis or conflict in the future.

Our final priority is to strengthen alliances.

Because as I said, we have them, our adversaries don't. And it remains our greatest strategic and asymmetric advantage. As Airmen, it takes on special meaning when we look at the history and the future of building and sustaining coalitions. Because nations around the globe face the same political challenges we do to offer boots on the ground. Unless they're littoral and have access to ports they don't buy Navy's. But what most countries with the resources to join a coalition actually have to protect their sovereignty is an Air Component. They offer it for the same reason we rely on it, because it projects power without corresponding vulnerability. So, coalitions often come together first in the air and then are sustained the longest. Think about this, General Harrigan, in leading the fight against ISIS with 16 nations in the fight, commands the 12th largest Air Force on the planet in the fight against ISIS. So I would offer that we have an obligation to build and sustain partner Air Forces we'll need in future conflict. And our command and control systems must evolve to become more inclusive of these partners as we smartly modernize for the future.

So yesterday, I spent all day, or all afternoon, speaking with our newest brigadier generals and senior civilian executives who are attending our Senior Leader Orientation Course, or SLOC, as many of you remember it. As a matter of fact, last night, they dined like a diplomat.

Well, I'll tell you. So I was up in Canada this last week and there were four of us at the table speaking with the Canadian air chief, and they brought the bread around, and four of us went like that. Bread. Dessert. Okay.

So as the 21st Chief of Staff, think about this, I'm fighting today with a force that was built by General Mike Ryan and General John Jumper. Such is the nature of history. In the SLOC class this week sits Chief 24 who will fight in 2030 with the force built by Wilson and Goldfein.

So Secretary Wilson and I have asked our team two key questions to ponder as we attack these priorities. Who do we need to be in 2030? And what's standing in our way?

This is an exciting time to be Chief of Staff and work with Dr. Wilson to lead this effort. And I will end by telling you that, for the United States Air Force, the sky is no longer the limit.

So thank you, again, for sponsoring this great breakfast. I look forward to any kind of questions you'd like to throw at me.