Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Well, good afternoon folks. I don't know how you can beat and follow General C.Q. Brown's talk, but if there's any panel that can do it, I promise you it's this one. We're really fortunate today that we've got three experts on a topic that's really important to our nation, the strategic modernization. Everybody knows Dr. LaPlante, the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. Before that, he was also our Air Force's Senior Acquisition Executive and did a fantastic job. So we're honored to have him here. We've got General Tony Cotton, the United States STRATCOM Commander, the commander who's responsible for all three legs of the triad and one of our 11 combatant commanders. And General Tom Bussiere, the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command. And again, with a very small following, you can see from all three.

So I'm going to open up the floor for them to make a couple minutes of comments and then I've got some questions and I promise you there's no softballs. So Dr. LaPlante, well let me start off with you, since you're the person in charge of... Let me just contact something. Right now, the nation is going through its biggest modernization projects in probably the last 75 years across every leg of the triad and somebody who's got to keep those balls juggled in the air is Dr. LaPlante. Dr. LaPlante, over to you.

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

Yeah, thank you, Seve, and it's great to be here. I wish I could be here all the time. This is the best conference, of course. I say that at every conference. No, really. I think just go right into it and I'll talk about some high level stuff before I turn over to General Cotton and General Bussiere. Why is this discussion so important beyond, importantly, what General Wilson just said? Of course, the fact that we're simultaneously modernizing all three legs, LRSO as well, NC3s we're working on, and of course that's not even talking about the NNSA, the weapon side at DOE. It's because this is really different. We now have two nuclear capable adversaries, and my colleagues here will talk more about that, and at least for my whole lifetime than many of ours, this is the first time that's ever happened.

The threat is different, it's not just hyperbole. And it's even different from five to 10 years ago. We must have a credible deterrent. We've had one that's successful for 70 years, we need one for the next 70 years and that no adversary would ever think it's in their interest to contemplate using nuclear weapon against the US or one of our allies. The 2022 NDS as a nuclear deterrent remains DOD's number one priority mission. It's a mission, by the way, we have the privilege of doing for the president and for the country. So we operate and do that mission for the president and for the country. As I mentioned, we've had the legacy platforms for 60 plus years and we need to do so for the future. It's a remarkable how long the legacy platforms have lasted. All three of the legacy platforms have been extended beyond anybody's dream, whether it's the Trident hulls, the B-52, or the ICBMs, or even for that matter at the ALCOM.

For my seat at ANS, I tried to serve with my partners here as a glue to synchronize in the building and across the enterprise this complex interdependent set of modernization programs, which as I mentioned also includes NC3 which is the subject even among itself and sustainment of our legacy programs. Most people gravitate naturally to the flagship triad programs and Tony and Tom will touch on those. But NC3 of course is equally important. As one of my colleagues at Johns Hopkins used to say, who analyzed all the NC3 messages, "No comms, no bombs." The three portfolio links together the platforms and enable decision-making and critical that we understand and modernize those capabilities with the rest of the triad across the boards. These are really tough acquisition challenges. Many of you remember all that we went through in the rollout at the time of what we called LRSB, which is now B-21 and the hard, hard work that was done there that equally hard work is being done in Columbia and right now in Sentinel and LRSO.

Through my role as the chair of the Nuclear Weapons Council as well, this is also a great example of how we're taking a concerted, synchronized approach to managing risk of those portfolios. Program management and good program management is all about risk management. It's not risk watching, it's risk management. And the bottom line is a nuclear arsenal is the foundation and bedrock of our overall defense for the country. It's also that for our allies as well. And so delivering modernized capabilities for the triad, the weapons as well as NC3 is a no fail mission. So Seve, I'll pass it on back to you. Over to you for the rest.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you, Dr. LaPlante. Tony, you need opening comments?

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

Yes, thank you. Man, I tell you what I know I'm purple now, but it sure really is nice to be able to see a whole bunch of Airmen and Guardians in the audience. So it's glad to be home. To kind of touch on what Dr. LaPlante was saying, foundation, we have to really think about this and each and every one of you that are in the audience play a role in this. Since the advent of the nuclear weapon, we as the United States had never have to worry about two near peer adversaries, plus others that can put us in harm's way or actually have an effect on rules-based international order. So each and every one of you in this room today, what got you here today is not what is going to get us where we need to be tomorrow. So when I look at all the Airmen and Guardian that are out in the room, you need to kind of understand from a strategic perspective how you play in the role of strategic deterrence each and every day because each and every one of you do.

General Wilson kind of mentioned I'm one of 11 combatant commanders. I think I'm probably the only one that every system in my portfolio that would be presented to me from a service component is under a modernization program today. So what does that mean for me every single day as a Commander Stratcom? What that means is I have to ensure that this nation has a safe, secure, effective, and credible strategic deterrent. And we do, and to be frank, a lot of it's on the backs of the men and women that are out there in this audience right now. But that's going to be key for us as we make the transition to a modernized force. Our adversaries understand that we have a safe, secure, effective, and credible force today. And they understand the capabilities and the technical advancements that we as the United States America has to make sure that we continue to do that.

Folks, I ask that each and every one of you that are out in the audience amongst with your friends, peers and colleagues also understand what it means to be that influencer because you are that influencer that understands where you are in this fight. I had opportunity to just return from Indo-PACOM last week, had opportunity to visit with most senior leaders of the Republic of Korea as well as Japan. And we talked about extended deterrence, we talked about that umbrella of strategic deterrence and the assurance to our allies. You need to understand that you play an important role to ensure that we have that assurance with our allies.

Integrated deterrence is also something that is much more than a buzzword. Integrated deterrence means that all levels of government, the whole of government plays a role in ensuring that I get the products delivered to me, presented to me as forces presented, whether it's from General Bussiere or Admiral Coddle that I can offer options up to the President of the United States for strategic deterrence. That's whether it's nuclear or conventional. That's whether it's kinetic or non-kinetic. That's where you're going to play a role. That's what strategic deterrence looks like in the 21st century. It's more than just ICBMs, bombers, submarines. It is the integrated effects that we get from conventional nuclear integration that will continue to allow us to ensure that rules-based international orders is kept at bay.

So thank you again, as members of the Air and Space Force that owns two legs plus the majority of NC3 by the way, of the portfolio that I manage on behalf of the President of the United States. Thank you.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you. General Cotton. General Bussiere. Any opening comments?

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

I absolutely do, General Wilson. Thank you. So before I give my brief comments, I feel obligated like I do in every forum to thank our Airmen and Guardians who are standing the watch right now, operators, maintainers, defenders, space professionals that have stood the watch for over 60 years, making sure we can sit and enjoy ourselves in venues like this. So are there any operators, maintainers or defenders from Global Strike in the audience? Thank you for what you do every day. We can't lose sight of that. It's a privilege to be on the stage with these fine gentlemen talking about what I would propose as our nation's most important mission, strategic deterrence, long range strike and Nuclear Command and Control Communications. And there's an exciting time. We are recapitalizing everything in our portfolio and as Dr. LaPlante says, we have the privilege and the honor of performing the national mission of strategic deterrence and the Department of the Air Force has two legs of that and roughly two thirds of our Nuclear Command and Control Communications.

And now we might have decided to recapitalize at an earlier stage. We are where we are and the urgency and importance has been discussed by many of our speakers this week as well as Dr. LaPlante and General Cotton. But it's an exciting time to recapitalize, but we can't do it by ourselves. Everything we do in Air Force Global Strike Commanders, we are the shepherds of nine of our Department of Defense acquisition programs recapitalizing two thirds of the triad. I can't do that without the professionals and Duke Richardson's team at AFMC. I can't do that without the professionals that support, enable and empower Global strike AMC, International Guard or Air Force Reserve Command. We can't do it alone and we don't have to. But we're going to talk about some exciting things today and I look forward to your questions.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you. So let me start off with Dr. LaPlante. We have a pretty big budget proposed going forward. Is it a good thing or a bad thing that we have the largest R&D budget in history?

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

It's a good thing, but what it also means is R&D without procurement and production is interesting but doesn't really matter at the end of the day. And prototyping and R&D and S&T is vital to what we do. But if we stop there, we don't have a deterrent. I'll remind you of the B-21 is that the risk reduction work going on B-21, depending how you define it, arguably went back one to two decades, whether it's on stealth, materials, all the rest of it. But once the decision was made in 2011 to go forward with the program by Secretary Gates, we went right into a risk reduction period with two contractors.

That risk reduction period involved thinking about production, what does it mean to produce a design that can be not just a design but can go into production. Then of course when we made the award in 2015, production readiness was part of the award. Production lots were awarded in 2015, production lots. We didn't say, "Let's do a prototype of the bomber, let's prototype two or three and then figure out later what we do." We knew that we couldn't do that. We knew we had to set up and we aimed at the hundred number of course, and when we awarded the contract, it was based upon readiness for production. We didn't make production an afterthought. There is nothing different in anything else if we

want to field it, if you don't think about production of it, if you are successful. So I guess I would just leave it at that production, production, production.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you. General Cotton, you mentioned earlier that we're now deterring two nuclear adversaries, China and Russia, that have to be deterred differently. So what are your thoughts and your approach on how we do this?

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

Yeah, thank you for the question. So one of the first thing that I did on the 12th of December after taking command on the ninth was where we brought the team together and I was able to use as a baseline, the NPR. And in the NPR it says, "If faced with challenges that makes it so you have to look at forced sizing or forced posture, you're free to do so." So I wanted to ensure from my team that with the arsenal that I have, the [inaudible 00:16:04] that I have, understanding the challenges of the objectives that I need to meet on behalf of the President of the United States, that I as a commander of US strategic command can do that. Today, the answer is absolutely yes, we can handle those challenges.

But then in February, if you remember, as we're still doing this analysis and we continue to do this analysis at this point today, I had to send a report into Congress and that report into Congress was when was the threshold crossed in which there were more ground-based ICBM systems in the PRC than there are in the United States. And in February is where I made that announcement to Congress that they had crossed that threshold. So once again, we're looking at the capacity and capability that we have.

You remember I opened up and said safe, secure, effective and credible, we're still safe, secure, effective, and credible. Let me foot stomp that. But it is time to have a conversation to understand with the nuances that we have with me being the commander that will receive new systems that also have legacy systems that are there to hold a fort and hold down the fort as well, to ensure that we are key eye on making sure that that transition makes it so I can continue to make that statement and make that statement hold. And that's that transition from legacy systems as we go into the new modernized systems. So that's what we're doing within Stratcom right now is ensure that the objectives that are presented from the President of the United States to me as a commander of Stratcom, that I can still meet those objectives and we can. And then how does that work?

And once again, I am looking to the audience, I'm looking to general Bussiere. I look to Dr. LaPlante to ensure that I love what he says, production, production, production. Because guess what? Produce, produce, produce. Because that's going to be key for us as we make the transition to a modernized force and still allow me to say what I can say with confidence today, I'm safe, I'm secure, I'm effective, and I'm credible because all those come into play when you talk about strategic deterrence.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you. So General Bussiere, I had the privilege of going out to Palmdale to see the bolt rollout of the B-21 and I know this audience is very keen to hear if there's any new information you can share on the B-21 and its progress.

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

Yeah, we're really excited about the B-21 Raider program. I don't know if anybody else is. So the B-21 program is going very well. The aircraft T1 is progressing through its ground testing phase. We are in the process of doing the engine runs on the B-21 at Northrop Grumman facilities at Palmdale, California and they're going very well. And we are very well looking forward to first flight this year. I've offered up my

services, they haven't taken them yet. But it's a very unique weapon system and you heard me in March at AFA Endeavor talk about the exquisite technology that's integrated into this weapon system. But it's not just the technology, it's the design and how we built this weapon system with industry where we integrated ops and maintenance into the design and production processes on day one.

So T1 that's going through its ground testing phase right now has the same mission systems on it that the production aircraft will have. That is a leap forward for our testers who are going to take this airframe through this flight testing regimens. Additionally, our maintainers were part of this program upfront, which makes maintainability, sustainment, the creation of our tech orders, and our train of supply much more agile. Now the processes and the milestones that we're paying attention to in the B-21 program are important, but they're only important because we have an actual operational need to field this exquisite capability. And that's coming with exquisite production techniques where T1, the people in the processes used to build this airplane are the same processes that we'll use to build a production aircraft. So from T1 until we get into production and we fill this exquisite capabilities, it'll be a smooth transparent process, right, Elvis?

But we're very excited. We're excited for Air Force Global Strike Command. We're excited for our Air force, but quite frankly we're excited for America.

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

And I'm really excited.

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

So am I.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Dr. LaPlante, how do you see technology's role and how we more quickly or more adeptly produce things and is there any technology in particular that excites you?

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

Yeah, thank you. And then of course I have to pile on and say the day in December of that rollout, there were so many of us pinching ourselves saying it actually this day. So it's wonderful. So let me talk a little bit about technology and sort of what's happening in my view and try to not use buzzwords and try to be kind of plain English. To start with, you asked about production, Seve, additive manufacturing and 3D printing is real and is real as a capability for us to use on our weapons systems. That was not the case 10 years ago. People were talking about it, but frankly it wasn't credible. It was a boutique. That's not true anymore. Additive manufacturing is being used to produce parts in aircraft engines. Car companies are using them for mission-critical cars. What's interesting about it is not just that you can do things fast, you can produce things that we could not have produced otherwise. And what's happening of course, and we're seeing it in Ukraine is it's also changing how sustainment is done. Ukrainians right as we speak are 3D printing parts, firing pins for the M777s and getting them right back into the fight. And yes, we made sure the Ukrainians had the proper IP because it was just mildly interesting to them about having the proper IP because they were at war. But yes, they're doing it properly.

So the other piece that's changed, I think is don't think only about the production. Now let's go back to the design phase for a moment, think about everything you have to do for design. All the iterations you have to do on Pareto type front analysis where you're cranking through lots of designs to find the sweet spot. And there's been much made correctly about digital engineering and having that all digital where you take advantage of high power computing and you can iterate and do things faster. This is the

argument and there's some evidence for it. Well if you collapse that with going right back and forth with additive manufacturing and going back and iterating with the same teams if you will, magic can happen. It's happening right now in commercial space where they're going in the design phase and I see Frank's here and he can nod up and down space development agencies seeing this to production and going up to NORBIT in three years. The same thing's happening with the car companies or Formula 1. So that's really, really exciting.

And then the other final piece I'll say is software. Of course software is important. Software has changed in the last 15 years, again enabled by advanced computing, as well also enabled by software factories and being able to do these agile processes. But all of these things have changed everything, but the fundamentals haven't changed. You still have to do program management 101, you have to have an integrated master schedule, you have to check the validity of your designs, you have to test. None of that goes away, but now there's potential for all of that to collapse and collapse in time.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

General Cotton, we've mentioned several times today that every leg of the triad plus NC3 is currently being modernized and it's concurrent. What concerns you the most, or is it the concurrent risk across all of them?

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

Yes.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Yes.

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

No, I mean, all kidding aside, I talk about legacy systems for a reason. I think it's going to be incredibly important for us as a nation to really pay attention to ensure that the legacy systems are there and available until the modernized systems are ready to take the load. There was a time I remember in my space days where we had an overlap and capability of a legacy system. I used to fly them, excuse me, the Titan IV-B and we had an overlap because we knew we were going to get the Delta IV Heavy in time. That turned out to be not so true and we actually put in a barn a couple of inner row satellites because we didn't have a heavy lift vehicle. That's one thing to do that in the space lift business and I wouldn't want to wish that upon any aspect of the portfolio within the United States. But that cannot happen for nuclear deterrence and strategic deterrence because as the margin thins we have to ensure.

I'm pretty simple and basic here as the Stratcom commander just deliver me the program of record. I mean it really is that simple on being able to deliver that program of record and then things will tend to fix itself. And when I say deliver the program of record to deliver the program of record as close to on time as you can, understanding that we won't then develop a gap in abilities and capabilities. That's going to be incredibly important for us.

And I'd like to spend a couple of seconds just talking about what Dr. LaPlante was saying on think about the agility for me as the operations lead for those weapons and weapons systems that would be presented to me by General Bussiere with the modernized systems. The agility that is inherent with the Sentinel program as well as the B-21 and truthfully with Columbia as well, allows the operational commander to do things with their weapon systems that I can't currently do with a legacy system. And the agility of being able to always not chase a threat but actually be lead edge in front is going to be incredibly reassuring for whoever takes my seat a couple of commands down the road. But that's going

to be incredibly important. And oh by the way, we've never experienced that in this business in the past. And why do I say that? It's because Minuteman 3, for example, has been in the arsenal since the onset of the Cold War. The B-52, same thing. So being able to kind of think through how we can take advantage of some really 21st century, yes, 21st century systems moving forward, it should be pretty exciting for all of Tom's folks that are in the audience that will get to manage those systems moving forward.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

So General Bussiere, let me pull in that string since you're here. Produce, produce, produce. The combatant commander needs capability. So for you, what makes strategic modernization different than just typical modernization efforts that are undergoing today?

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

So the recapitalization of the triad and in this case the Air Force portfolio for the Land Leg and the Air Leg as well as NC3 and some of our command and control platforms, it's a unique business. It's unique in the sense that we have to maintain full operational capability on all our weapon systems to meet General Cotton and the nation's demand signals. We don't get to take a knee or take an off ramp as we field new capabilities. So as we field the B-21 to replace the B-1 and B-2, I have to maintain my full operational capability with the B-2 fleet until replace with the B-21 fleet.

In April of this year, we celebrated the 71st anniversary of the B- 52's first flight. We're going to keep that airplane around for another 30 plus years. So as we transition from the B-52 Hotel to the B 52 Juliet, we put New Motors radar and avionics on that. Again, a testament to not only industry but to our Airmen who maintain and operate that platform, it will go on for quite a ways. We have to maintain full operational capability when we provide our capabilities in the Air leg to the nation. We have the capability that we're transitioning with the Minuteman 3 to Sentinel. We have to maintain full operational capability in the floor for General Cotton's national leads while we do that. That's never been done before. You couple that with one of the most complex programs our nation's undertaken in probably 50 plus years, it will be something that everyone would be paying attention to.

We're replacing the UH-1 November hotel with the MH-139 Grey Wolf to provide the missile operators and defenders the capabilities of range speed and payload required to defend our convoys and our missile fields. We're going to be replacing the National Airborne Operation Center with the Survival Airborne Operation Center. We're going to be building new infrastructure support, both the Sentinel and the B-21 program. We're going to be recapitalizing the Nuclear Command and Control architecture as we field these new capabilities. The very unique aspect as we field the new is we have to maintain full operational capability and there's no slack operationally to do that. We've heard yesterday and today the threat demands that we feel these capabilities, we can't take a knee. So that's what keeps me awake at night.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

So let me pick the complexity just to it hit Sentinel. Somebody has mentioned to me that when we start the program, we're going to be required to produce a missile, the launch facility, and the underlying NC3 that supports it at one a week for nine years.

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

That's a nuance of the program itself, but it will be complicated. I haven't fact checked this with Mr. Google, but it's been purported to be the largest works project our nation's undertaken in 50 years since President Eisenhower did the Interstate Program.

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

Produce, produce, produce.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Produce, produce, produce. Dr. LaPlante to produce, produce, produce takes people. Are you concerned about attracting the people needed to accomplish all the modernizations that we've just talked about on the books?

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

Yes. The people of course are central, take care of our people is the secretary's priority. It's the Air Force's priority. The people means of course the Airmen, the Guardians that have been spoken about, my colleagues, the ones that are out there every day right now as we speak. But the people also is the acquisition workforce. The people are the contracting officers and the people include industry, both industry development and production, production, production and sustainment. And in all of those cases you have to have the best people. The country that wins in the people race in those areas or the company, if it's an outside company, that wins is going to win overall.

And when you've looked at the last four or five years, what we've all been through both inside and outside the government and we've seen the change both in the demographics and how people are expectations on work-life balance and what we could do remotely, what not remotely. We've all been challenged. Assumptions are changing that used to be firm like you need a college degree to be a professional software developer. Companies are now recognizing, you can see some of the best software developers didn't even go to college. We have to think differently about the workforce and every CEO that's worth their salt, that is the number one thing they worry about at night.

Finally, I do want to mention another thing about the agility comment that General Cotton mentioned. Just give an example. We make much of the deliberate open architecture OMS that was built into B-21 and a similar architecture is going to be done in Sentinel. Here was why we did it just to state the obvious, we did it for exactly the reason Gerald Cotton said we didn't know what the future was, but we did know we had to give enough trade space so that the future, it could go in different directions. People talk about software rightfully so as being agile, but if you don't have a way to enter the software into your architecture or even a new piece of hardware, if it's a closed system, it's very difficult to do.

But once you have an open system, we have capability. We could cross deck algorithms, sensors, and everything very, very quickly. We're demonstrating that right now in the department on these competitive pathfinders where we're taking open architectures with software-defined waveforms for example. That one service is developed for a Counter-C5ISRT, countering enemy C4ISRT, and we're finding we can just swap it right across to another services platforms and proliferate at scale. It's remarkable what you can do, but you cannot do it if you have a closed system. So building the systems open allows that, and the same is going to be true for sensors. We're going to be able to swap sensors, sensors that haven't even been invented yet. So that's what this open architecture allows. Thank you.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Thank you. General Bussiere, let me come to you because you've mentioned some of the older platforms that you're flying, whether it be a B-52 or Minuteman 3 that's now built in the 60s, upgraded

in the 70s. You also fly an E-4B, it came from the E-4A that's been in service since 1974. So why do we need a SAOC?

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

So the Survival Airborne Operations Center to replace the E-4B that we're currently flying. Again, not unlike our previous weapons systems we discussed is really past due on recapitalization. So it is probably the most important platform we use for Airborne Command and Control that supports the President of the SecDef and the chairman as well as the Commander of Stratcom on a daily basis globally. And high demand, low density is an understatement. And again, a small fleet dynamic that we are curing on the backs of our operators and maintainers and defenders that field that weapon system every day. Our nation has very rightly so recognized we need to replace it and recapitalize it. We're cautiously optimistic we'll get the number of airframes we need and we're hopeful that in '24 we'll get more positive news about that weapon system being fielded.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Dr. LaPlante, you start out by saying the strategic deterrent mission is the number one priority mission of the Department of Defense. In the last few minutes that we have remaining, what would be the one thing that you would tell this crowd about why this is important and what's the one message you want to leave the AFA crowd with about strategic modernization?

Dr. William A. LaPlante:

Yeah, so I try to put it maybe in a way that I've learned from a lot of my colleagues here in uniform and former uniform, and I've listened to them over the years. And I remember something one time that retired general at the time or general retired, he still retired, Larry Welch said when he was chairing the SAG meeting back in 2006, 2007, and it stuck with me ever since. And he said, "We operate this force under a different set of conditions and thought processes and have to than another set of military capabilities." Military capabilities are to win wars and the services have the organized training equipment and all that. Really important, no question, but we tend to take risk there and mindful risk in terms of operational risk and the like that we would never and should never take in the nuclear forces because we as a country, if we have a policy, which is what we have of a nuclear deterrent with a triad, it is our solemn duty as a department of defense to operate it with fail-safe.

Okay, fail-safe. In other words, we don't argue over whether you should have it or not. That's out of our decision. That's the leadership of the country's decision. But once they've made that decision, we can't say, "Well, we'll take a risk over here. Let's trade that against this non-nuclear thing." It's just in a different category and it's always something to remind ourselves because it's easy, at least for me, to sometimes lose track of that. So I'd say if I could leave you something, it really is different and it has to be thought of differently.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

General Cotton.

Gen. Anthony J. Cotton:

Yeah. I think to add to what Dr. LaPlante said, I think fundamentally if everyone understands that national security strategy of the United States foundational to it is strategic deterrence and more importantly the nuclear deterrent piece of that. If you understand that, that that's really important. I think as I look out in the audience, if I was to ask folks to raise their hands and say, "Who in the audience

thinks that they directly support me today?" I don't think I'd get the entire audience to raise their hands. But ultimately each and every one of you that are out in the audience, regardless of what command patch you have on your chest, each and every one of you support strategic deterrence in this room. And when you fundamentally understand that, we've kind of figured out the secret sauce.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

General Bussiere, last words to you.

Gen. Thomas A. Bussiere:

Thank you. I'm going to end where I started and that's saying thank you. Thank you to our Airmen and Guardians that are here. Thank you to AFA for setting up this venue so that we can have these professional development opportunities with each other and with industry. Thank you to my fellow MAJCOM commanders that enable, empower and support everything we do in Air Force Global Strike Command. A little bit biased, but I think it's our nation's most important mission. Thanks to our industry partners for being here and developing our capabilities that we're going to field in the next few decades to deter bad actors across the globe. And do me a favor when you go home after AFA, thank your families. Thank your loved ones for supporting, enabling, and empowering your service for our nation. Thank you.

Gen. Stephen W. "Seve" Wilson:

Gentlemen, thank you for a very rich discussion on a really important topic for our nation and for participating in this AFA event.