



1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22209-1198 (703) 247-5800  
An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization

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Benjamin Sherwood  
President, ABC News  
147 Columbus Ave.  
New York, NY 10023

Mr. Sherwood,

ABC News owes America's Air Force Airmen an apology in response to the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Nightline segment regarding the F-22 Raptor. As your story highlighted, the F-22 fleet faces technical challenges regarding its onboard oxygen generation system. This is a serious issue that warrants responsible, informed, and objective assessment. Instead, your network chose to air a sensationalized, biased report that demeans the service, sacrifice, and dedication to duty of the Airmen who fly, maintain, and support the F-22 in defense of the United States.

The F-22 is a fighter aircraft fielded to secure air dominance in hostile regions around the world so that America's men and women in uniform will not be subject to aerial attack. To suggest that such a mission is no longer relevant solely based on experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan ignores blatant realities regarding the current global security environment. As President Obama's new strategic defense guidance highlights, the United States has interests that extend far past these two nations. Potential adversaries around the globe possess an array of capabilities that would challenge our nation's ability to secure and maintain air dominance in a future conflict. Such threats, left unchecked, would impede our ability to project effective power and would instead precipitate mass American casualties. The F-22 is operated to ensure this will not happen.

Your network's recent story regarding the F-22 hardly addressed these issues. Instead, your reporting team chose to selectively frame the discussion in a highly cynical fashion that poked fun and made light of genuine national security realities. You did not interview a single individual capable of presenting an objective assessment regarding the role of the F-22, the problems associated with the onboard oxygen generation system, and airpower's overarching contribution to national security. Instead, you allowed known critics to dominate the story—none of whom have direct experience with the design, production, operation, and continued sustainment of the F-22. Snide comments about the F-22 as an "air show airplane" make for great catch phrases. Not only are such statements inaccurate, but they disparage the men and women who have pledged to fly into harm's way in defense of our nation. ABC News owes them better.

We do not shy away from the fact that the F-22 onboard oxygen generation system faces technical problems. We also think the serious nature of this issue requires responsible reporting that is informed by a balanced presentation of facts, not biased opinions that devolve into an attack on America's Airmen.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Dunn  
Lt Gen USAF (Ret.)  
President and CEO