

May 17, 2008,

AFA Members, Congressional Staffers, Civic Leaders, and DOCA members, China has been in the news recently - first as a result of a horrific earthquake and secondly - as we approach the summer Olympics - there is an increase in world understanding of what China is doing. We posted recent WSJ article (http://www.afa.org/EdOp/edop_5_13_08.asp) on our website ... which points to the build-up in China's military ... and like AFA ... the piece advocates for increased US defense spending. Mr. Helprin points out that for most of the 20th century, we averaged spending 5.7% of our GDP - **each year** - on defense [the present number today is about 3.4% (excluding war costs) and 4.0% (including war costs)]. I have said publicly ... that we certainly have the money. To wit: in a little over 3 weeks, Congress passed a bill - without one single hearing - which borrowed \$168B from our children and grandchildren - to give to us ... in the name of a "fiscal stimulus" ... which most economists say won't work. We have the money -- this is all about will ... and leadership.

Secondly, we have a new policy briefing on Space Power on our website (http://www.afa.org/EdOp/Satellite_Brief.pdf). It better explains our present space capabilities ... and describes the programs in the works. I have to note to you that **we take these capabilities for granted**. For example, we have come to expect the GPS sets in our cars, boats, and planes to magically tell us where we are ... without realizing that 14 of the 30 birds are within one component of failure ... and the average age of the GPS fleet is greater than the design life of the satellites. I mentioned, during our last symposium, that we had satellites in orbit which were "old enough to vote." Then the commander of AF Space Command, Gen Kehler, corrected me saying: "We actually have some that are old enough to drink!"

Finally, many of you have been watching the debate on a new GI Bill - one which takes the "peace-time" Montgomery GI Bill and updates it for the future ... making it more like the original post-war GI Bill. Your Association has taken a stand on the bill. For our press release on it, go to:

<http://www.afa.org/media/press/gibill.asp>

I encourage you to forward this note to others who may be interested in airpower.

For your consideration.

Mike

Michael M. Dunn, Lt Gen (Ret)
President/CEO

