

Secretary Wynne – AFA Air & Space Conference

Monday, September 24, 2007

Moderator: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome again to the Air Force Association's Air & Space Conference. Our next speaker really does not need an introduction, but I'm going to give him one anyway. As the Secretary of the Air Force, he's responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, including the organization, training, equipping, and providing welfare of its nearly 370 thousand men and women on active duty, 180 members of the Air Guard and the Air Force Reserve, 160 thousand civilians and their families. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Wynne served as the Principal Deputy Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, & Logistics. Please help me welcome to the stage, our Secretary of the Air Force and a great supporter of the AFA, Secretary Wynne

(Applause.)

Wynne: Thank you. Thank you, Boyd. Thank you for that short introduction. It's always a great pleasure to be here and to address the Air Force Association. Bob Largent, Chairman of AFA--thank you so much. You're just a first-rate supporter of our Air Force, and we certainly appreciate that. Mike Dunn, thank you, the Air Force newsletter you put out, almost on a daily basis now, certainly is expressive. It makes us all think about things of our Air Force. Thank you very much—that's very inventive and much appreciated. Can I just take a minute and thank Gen. Buzz Moseley for being my partner in this run through the rapids. He teaches me about how to avoid the rocks. I really want to tell you what a great partner Gen. Buzz Moseley has been. Thank you, Buzz.

The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Rod McKinley, I will tell you that Rod is a phenomenal wingman. Rod has his finger on the pulse of airmen. Rod has been there many times to provide a cautionary hand or help put our foot on the accelerator to get the job done. I want to personally thank Rod McKinley for riding wing on our Air Force in the best way possible. The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Rod McKinley.
(Applause.)

It is a multilateral world and I will tell you there's just no better underline and underscore to the multilateral nature of our world than to welcome almost 90 global air chiefs to this Air Force Association conference. You gentlemen represent the coalition of allied and friendly nations from which we take succor; you let us know that what we do to help, to nurture, to befriend, has taken root in many parts of the world and is reflected by your attendance here today and I will tell you, as Adm. Mullen quests after a thousand-ship Navy, you bring us a 10-thousand aircraft Air Force. Thank you so much for coming.
(Applause.)

Combatant commanders, thank you for attending. Civic leaders, thank you all for being here. Your cooperation and support across our Air Force cannot be more heralded. Every

time that you interface with one of our wings, our squadrons, as an honorary squadron commander, it is phenomenal...thank you, thank you very much for that.

Air Force senior leaders, what a phenomenal team, I will tell you—the responsive nature of this team cannot be overestimated. This is a tough thing, as Gen. Moseley said; we're in a tight turn. We're accelerating, we're climbing, and we're doing all sorts of aerobatic maneuvers. This team stays on wing in a fabulous way and I want to personally reach out and salute and though I passed over quickly Gene Renuart, who is here and I told him that when you get to be a big pooh-bah leader like a combatant commander you don't have to come, and he said, "I wouldn't have missed it." This is the kind of team that every Secretary quests after, and it came together for us, and gentlemen, ladies, thank you so much. We appreciate it. (Applause.)

The MAJCOM command chiefs, thank you—it's terrific. The Air Force Association award winners, thank you. The student and faculty of the Air Command and Staff College, thank you so much for being here. This is our future. You mentor us as much as we mentor you. Our leadership team looks many times to the Air Command and Staff College to get a little bit of vector change to find out where we are and we also want you to hear us and to really understand where we're coming from and, frankly, to assemble and put a little bit of grist and a little bit of fat on the bones so that we endure and have muscle for the future, and you're it. So thank you very much for being here to listen, to listen to all of us. We very much appreciate you being here.

With that I will tell you it's an absolute pleasure to talk to this great audience. The Air Force Association is really one of our strongest supporters, both in good times and in bad times. Today I'm happy to report that the state of the world's greatest Air Force is good. We have to pay attention to the discipline that America expects and I assure you that we will continue to be accountable and responsible for the awesome tasks assigned in the defense of America's freedoms. But I also have to tell you that there are clouds on the horizon, and if we're going to continue our success into the future, we're going to need a lot of help from each and every one of you over the next few years. But before I talk about the future, I would like to thank you for what you're all doing.

We are all volunteers from the very lowest airman who has just stepped down to Lackland today all the way to the Secretary of the Air Force, whether it's active, Guard, Reserve, or civilian, we're all volunteers adding value to our Air Force and we in turn value what you do. The men and women of our Air Force are doing fantastic things, whether in war or in humanitarian relief and in science and technology to build the world a better future, to build America a better future and find our part in it. But we could not do it without all of you. Your tireless support of our total force cannot be overstated. Your tireless efforts are key to getting our message out--a really big shout-out and thank you to the Air Force Association. Thank you so much.

This year as the Air Force celebrates its 60th anniversary we have had a chance to look back and reflect upon where we've been and to plan our flight path for the future. As

services go, we are relatively young, and we still remember our heroes. Many of us knew them personally. I would not be surprised if one person in this room served or knew people who served with Jimmy Doolittle, with Hoyt Vandenberg, and Curtis LeMay. There may be people here who knew Billy Mitchell personally. At West Point, my father, himself a founding member of our Air Force, shared a dorm room with Hap Arnold's son. We know our heroes. These men were giants and they transformed the way we fight. They had a vision for a better way of doing things. They were innovators, technologists, commanders, and above all, fighting men and warriors.

I was just at Edwards Air Force Base this past weekend celebrating our 60th anniversary, and Chuck Yager, General Chuck Yager, flew in a four-ship breaking the sound barrier in his 65th year of flying. I kidded him about delaying his achievement until the Air Force was born because he did his achievement, breaking the sound barrier, in October of 1947, and the Air Force was born in September of 1947, and if you watch the movie or read the book, you'll know that he incrementally approached that sound barrier and so he was somewhat taken aback that someone would have noticed that he delayed his achievement until the Air Force was alive, well, and fully born, and he remains true to blue today—one of our true heroes. Under our heroes and their heirs, your Air Force has fought our nation's wars and defended its border for six decades after becoming a separate service, and for at least five decades prior. For sixty years, their vision has led to unprecedented global vigilance, global reach, and global power. Well, I am proud to report that the tradition that they started continues to be alive and well in your Air Force today. We remain proud of our airmen and their heritage.

I keep a picture of Curtis LeMay in my office where I can see it when I'm in meetings. When I have to bring myself to make a decision, I often look at that picture, and ask the question, which I have sketched on the bottom: "What would Curt do?" Yes, it still applies. And it makes more than a few that are with me squirm just a little bit because they know exactly what Curt would do even before I prompt them. When Curtis LeMay was commander of Strategic Air Command, he realized the Air Force faced a unique problem with personnel. We recruit the best and then we train them to be better. In order to keep that force and ensure it is ready to fight we have to cultivate our men and women in uniform. LeMay's answer at the time, simple and direct as always, was that we recruit airmen but we retain families. Missions change over time, but this guiding principle has remained and grown across the decades. Today we talk about recruiting and developing a battle-ready, knowledge-enabled force. We have succeeded at this goal. Today our airmen are the best in the world and the best in history. They are truly spectacular. Ladies and gentlemen, all of our founders, Billy Mitchell, Spaatz, Arnold, Eaker, LeMay, and Yager would be and are exceptionally proud. In recent years, we pushed hard to develop a knowledge-enabled force, and we now have the best-educated force in our history. Our enlisted ranks are far better-educated than the officers who served in the Second World War, and our officers are among the best-educated segment of American society.

The last 17 years have not been an easy time for airmen—we have been at war the entire time. We arrived in Southwest Asia in support of the buildup of Desert Storm. We never came home. As we fought and patrolled the skies above Iraq, Bosnia, Serbia,

Afghanistan, our people have spent an unusual amount of time away from home. It is not unusual to find airmen who have deployed five or six times across that time period. In fact, some are nearing the end of a robust 20-year career, having been at war since they were second lieutenants and are now arriving at the end of a 20-year career never having been in a service that was not at war. It is not easy to measure the price of deployment for airmen—what is the cost of missing a child’s first steps, of a Christmas spent in the desert, in loneliness or loss or in other more tangible costs? This is where I really want to compliment the work that the Air Force Association is doing to help reduce these costs because it is at least as important as anything we’re doing ourselves. The support that spouses and families get from the surrounding communities today is fabulous, and I salute the civic leaders who take advantage not only of programs we offer but also give back so much.

Barbara recently visited a DOD school and was floored by the quality of the education and the students therein. This doesn’t just happen. It requires a community of interest. It requires people thinking about and taking care of each other. It requires civic pride and a community pride that our airmen bring to everything they do everyday. This pride comes from Air Force supporters who work in the community. What we are seeing in our communities today is the work of civic leadership, the work of caring individuals, and of course the work of the Air Force Association. Thank you, thank you. (Applause.)

Last year when I addressed you, you saw a video that showed in pictures how we fight because I wanted to highlight the interconnectivity that our airmen had drawn and our JTACs were providing to ground force commanders; and I wanted to show you that how we fight is about interconnectivity and about bringing the fight from CONUS all the way to the enemy. And I wanted to make sure that we all understood what it was that airmen were bringing to the fight after 17 long years. It was such a hit that this year we’ve actually put together, if you will, the sequel. Sometimes a single picture or video clip is worth a thousand words and I don’t want you to sit through several thousand words. So the video I’m about to show you starts where last year’s video left off. What I want you to see, what we want America to see, is that the United States Air Force is the nation’s strategic force. Our air, space, and cyber forces are setting the conditions for victory, interconnected with our international partners, interoperable with our international partners, and interleaving our force structure and their force structure is really where our future lies. This new American way of war depends upon the often invisible contributions that the Air Force is making to the fight, whether in air or space or cyberspace. You will see that we many, many times set the conditions for strategic and then perhaps tactical victory. Please roll the tape. (Tape plays.) (Applause.)

That is your Air Force at war, and many times it will be your Air Force at peace and supporting humanitarian relief operations all over the world and with great support from our international partners.

I just mentioned that the Air Force has been at war for 17 years, but when I watch the news at night, I don’t always get that feeling. I certainly don’t see many of the scenes we just saw in that video. The media has a tendency to focus selectively. A camera crew will

pass up a house that is not on fire for the one that is every time. But it can be a bit frustrating since we're doing so much in this current war. For 17 years we have dominated the skies above our enemies and the air operation region. This achievement, however, does not make for good television. You can't see air dominance. It doesn't make for good newsprint. A headline like, "The US Air Force provided air dominance today again for the 54th year in a row," just wouldn't be a seller.

In fact, sometimes I think all of us around the world, but especially here in America, have become so accustomed to the Air Force dominating the skies that we don't understand why it matters. Like sea dominance, it often is on the assumptions page of the war plan, i.e., we dominate the sea, we dominate the air, let's get on to what the fight's going to be all about. It is simply assumed. But I say that assumption matters. It matters because the last time a serviceman was attacked from the air was in April of 1953. That was, yes, a long time ago. If you wonder why not being attacked from the air is important, you can ask Saddam or you can ask the Taliban. They know what happens when you lose control of the air.

Today the entire joint force clamors for full-motion video like that from a Predator, but these slow-moving and vulnerable unmanned air vehicles must be able to fly with impunity if they are to work as they are intended. We must have air dominance to do that. As we are currently engaged in inter-service discussions about whether the Air Force should have executive agencies over unmanned air vehicles, it's really all about standards of communication, and if you will, getting the take. And we're actually fairly proud of the movement so far because we've moved toward more standard collection and distribution of the information in the take and we feel like some standards will be achieved, but frankly the whole debate shows the inter-service faith that the Air Force will provide air dominance for another 50 years. However, if it was up to us, right, we would take a page out of our Army colleagues' books and shoot them all down and let God sort them out if they did not squawk friendly.

You know, in the Israeli-Lebanon war, the Israeli Army did not realize that Hezbollah was going to fly UAVs over their positions. As soon as they did realize, they began to hunt them. And as soon as they started to hunt them of course, since they had air dominance, Hezbollah had to withdraw their unmanned air vehicles.

Like air dominance, some of our other contributions seldom make headlines. I often wonder how many Americans know that the Air Force is supplying most of the striking power in the war today. I wonder how many people realize how many hundreds of coalition lives our forces save by flying in supplies and keeping convoys off the road, and by the precision nature of our air strikes. But there is something we are doing that is potentially even more important than delivering bombs, although we do love to blow stuff up.

That is, we're deterring the enemy from massing. If we were not deterring the enemy, rather than fighting us in groups of 10 and 20 and striking very fast and fading they would be coming at us in groups of 200 to 500 or 1000. I guarantee you that if airpower

were not there it would be an entirely different war. In fact, no less a military authority than the Washington Post recognized that al Qaeda refuses to mass under American airpower. In short, we are setting the conditions for war, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and this is all of us, coalition Air Forces, that are setting these conditions, for if the coalition air forces were not present and accounted for, it would be a very different fight.

Setting the conditions for victory goes well beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. I am sometimes asked: why are you pursuing fifth generation fighters? The answer is that over the next two decades our fourth generation fighters will slowly lose their ability to get the job done. In 20 or 25 years the types of operation we're doing today to keep al Qaeda from massing will no longer be possible with our current inventory. I was at a retirement ceremony for an Air Force female brigadier general, and her uncle jumped up and came up to me and said: "The Air Force missed a huge opportunity." And I said, "what would that be, sir?" And he said, "I flew the P-51 and I was a fighter-pilot and why the Air Force abandoned that I will never know—it was the finest fighter we ever had." And I told him, I said, "I am so glad to hear you say that," and the reason I am is that every one of our fighter-pilots should have as an underlying assumption that the aircraft we give him to fly will dominate his enemy and in short order.

Stated bluntly, the war we are currently fighting, especially in Iraq, is a war of choice—it is an important war, and it is an engagement that America decided to fight after much deliberation. But it is clearly a war of choice. What worries me the most are wars that are not of our choice. The reason we have the choice of where and when to fight is because we can dissuade and deter our opponents. They know that air superiority allows us to go downtown whenever we want. They know if we must we can put exposed US ground troops in their country and vulnerable UAVs over their territory with little risk to ourselves. This ability makes our enemies think twice about challenging us. It deters them. We don't have to fight wars of the enemy's choosing because of our perceived dominance. As the Strategic Air Command's motto put it: Peace is our profession, because all you have to do is ask warriors whether they prefer war or peace, and it's an easy choice, we would all choose peace.

But I would say in trying to elicit a difference, the difference between having air superiority and not having it is the difference between Dunkirk and Normandy. When Eisenhower was dispatching troops to Normandy's shores, he assured them, "if you look up and see an airplane, it's going to be a friendly airplane, keep doing your job." This air dominance was not cheap--the price for air dominance and air superiority and the price to allow General Eisenhower to admonish his troops in that way was 40,000-plus airmen. In Korea, we did not achieve air dominance until April of 1953. Being able to deter opponents is not necessarily a given, it is certainly not necessarily a birthright. Our fourth generation fighters are rapidly becoming unable to fight, to face the types of defenses that are now being sold by some of our Russian colleagues, to Tehran, to Caracas and to others, much less against major power competitors. Your Air Force has put fourth generation technology behind us because it gets us uncomfortably close to the fair fight we don't want. If our coalition partners are going to fly beside us, they will want us to have fifth generation fighters, and they will want to get as close as they can to fifth

generation as well. Please take as an assignment—no, a challenge, accelerate the move in all of our services to fifth generation. Keep the fair fight comfortably far away.

When we have air dominance and you are on the ground, if you get in a fair fight it is because of poor planning. It means the air operations center was not alerted and it probably means airpower was not called in a timely fashion. In fact, one time I listened to a seven-minute clip on CNN, and I saw the marines attacked on both sides, and I saw those brave marines fight their way through that ambush, and then I saw them get themselves into a single-sided ambush and I saw them fight their way through that ambush. And I called the Commandant, and I said, General, why is it that I did not hear the womp womp womp of 20 mm, I did not hear the big boom of a 500-pounder going off? I did not hear it, I said, and by the way, I'm not selling my Air Force—I mean you have an Air Force if you choose to use it.

If our airmen are in a fair fight, it is for a very different reason, and one that is far less excusable. It is because our nation did not invest in that asymmetric advantage that America brings to every fight, which is technology. Put simply, we have a choice. We can fight to build this fifth generation technology here in Washington, or we can shrink away from the bureaucratic battle today and then be called on to fight for real air superiority in the hostile skies in the decades to come. The ability of our Air Force to dominate the skies of tomorrow frankly depends upon what our nation is willing to invest today--that is why not P-51s. We have air dominance today, but unless we field fifth generation fighters and put behind us fourth generation, I feel like that position will begin to erode. And by the way, procurement programs take decades, and many can't be rushed. I'm saying in the most direct way I can, invest today or we risk not being able to dominate the air or the ground in the decades to come.

Currently our F-22 and our JSF program, the F-35, are doing very well. The F-22 was just awarded a three-year multiyear contract for 60 aircraft, inching us ever closer to that stated requirement of 381 Raptors. And the F-35 recently awarded their first low-rate initial production contract. But to be completely frank, this year, like every other year for a long time now, our budget is below what our procurement requirements would ask for. We can no longer afford to buy at economic order quantities or at a rational replacement rate. Unless we fill in that gap, we'll remain at risk of reducing our clear lead. If we don't tell our story today, if we don't convince the nation that we need to fill this gap for air, for space, and for cyberspace, someday inadvertently, we will entice an enemy of the future to try us on for size. But by the way, I'm not only asking for your help in telling the nation about aircraft. The story is bigger than air dominance.

In recent years, the way America fights wars has changed. In our new way of war, we are enormously dependent upon space and cyberspace. This integrated and connected way of war has once again provided us the asymmetric advantage we get from technology. Today, our space assets provide us with unprecedented ISR capabilities, and allow us to network with our forces across the globe. These capabilities multiply the combat power of units both in the air and on the ground. Global positioning system and global communications that come with the control of space have been essential to the way we

fight. But even more than our ability to dominate air, our ability to dominate space is not guaranteed. It is not a birthright. Recently, as we showed in the film, the Chinese have proved this when they destroyed one of their own weather satellites. Now I will tell you we were shocked but not surprised—why is that? Well I was shocked that they didn't own up to it but not surprised since they can put satellites into space and once you can put a satellite into space you can choose to put it where another satellite is or you can put it where a satellite isn't. What was shocking is that they didn't own up to it. If they destroyed one of theirs, they can probably destroy one of ours.

Space, therefore, must be labeled a contested domain. On top of facing a contested realm, I must also tell you that our space assets are flat wearing out. Most of the satellites have now exceeded their programmed life spans, and while we appreciate what industry has done to make that happen, frankly they should have been replaced long ago, and we are now awaiting their fuel to run out because they operate in a reliable fashion. But if we wish to maintain this asymmetrical advantage we get from space, then we need to take action to protect this ultimate high ground. I'm happy to tell you that we're beginning to make progress in this area—our back-to-basics is working. We will launch our new wideband gap-filler satellites and our AEHF satellite systems next year. Procurement of the SBIRS begins in 2008 and TSAT is moving right along. We really think these programs are under control. But again, our current budget does not necessarily match what we think the requirements are that come down from the national security regime and sometimes even from DOD, so if we are to dominate space in the future we again will need your help in explaining to the nation why space is so vital. We need for you to tell our story. We cannot afford to skip a generation in space because it will frankly fall out of the sky.

I've talked about air and I've spent a little time on space, and now I'd like to say a few words about cyberspace. Cyberspace is that command and control regime that effectively commands and controls the other four domains: of ground, marine--maritime, air, and space. In recent years, the new American way of war has become dependent upon cyberspace. Virtually all of our information and reconnaissance communications flow through this domain. Our aircraft and smart munitions are dependent upon computers and software and the dialogue that goes on between. Reachback—people who are here in CONUS, whether they're National Guard, Reserve, or active duty airmen, flying our machines and providing advice, whether they're space assets or many times our unmanned air systems—is increasingly important. Our air operations centers are completely dependent upon their analysis, and though they can operate without cyber, it would be like going back to slide rules, for those of us who remember slide rules, from the personal data assistants we have today.

The interconnectivity that cyberspace permits has bought us a lot both in the air and on the ground. For one thing, rather than fighting sustained bloody battles on the ground, soldiers' main job now is distinguishing between civilians and combatants. We like for the ground forces to force the enemy to mass, and when they do we're ready to be there and we can rain death and destruction from the air. And the value of our new cyber capabilities is not limited to just this. New JDAM guidance kits, when mounted on

logistics pallets, are allowing us to deliver logistics precisely on target anywhere anytime. And it is beginning to change the way that our Army considers logistics. Maybe they don't have to carry all the supplies on their back—maybe they can actually march to supplies of new ammunition and maybe we can, in a precise way, fulfill their need without them having to carry it. We call this vertical logistics. Systems like ROVER, when used during Hurricane Katrina, allowed us to monitor events in New Orleans and save lives. Systems like Cursor on Target has expanded the ROVER capabilities and made it available to first responders, and we have 81 national agencies signed up for Cursor on Target accessing their databases through this magic portal of common data frames.

Another area where cyber is important involves coalition communications. The synergy the United States Air Force receives from its coalition partners in Afghanistan and Iraq and many times all around the world are crucial to our successes. We depend upon our international partners many more times than even we ourselves care to admit, but our communications with our allies are not always what they should be. It is not only vital that our people can speak to each other, it is also vital that our machines can speak to each other. Our vision for the future is interconnected situational awareness, shared by the United States and its allies to the maximum extent possible. To make this work is going to require us to rethink coalition cyber, to rethink analog versus digital, to rethink permission slips versus encryption. This is the same problem we overcame in trying to fuse our intelligence and drive it down to our tactical forces. Not the tactical battalions or divisions or CAOCs, but to the people on the ground, the JTACs that need it so desperately.

On another level our entire Air Force, Department of Defense, and even our nation has become dependent upon cyberspace—our personnel systems, our financing, our utilities are all to an extent dependent upon cyberspace. Even my son-in-law, who is a golf course superintendent, many times turns his sprinkler systems on and off using cyberspace. The way America works, the way America fights, is changing, and we need to get on top of it and as coalitions, we need to better understand it and not leave ourselves back in the age of semaphore flags but move ourselves forward. We've gained enormously by harnessing this medium but in doing so we've also opened up vast vulnerabilities.

Unfortunately some countries have created quite a stir in cyberspace. Earlier this year it was reported that Russia launched an all-out cyber attack on Estonia, one of the most advanced, by the way, data-connected and interconnected nations. Other countries regularly flex their cyber muscles against the US, and against many of you in the audience who are allies around the globe. As many of you heard on the Air Force's 60th anniversary, on the 18th, I officially stood up Air Force Cyber Command (Provisional). Today, I would like to announce that the new Cyber MAJCOM Provisional, located at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and with regard to organization it will be commanded by Maj. Gen. Bill Lord. The new Cyber Command will answer to me directly through General Moseley. I can't tell you that we would have ever gotten here without the incredible contributions of ACC and its commander, Gen. Ron Keys, and the 8th Air Force, under the command of Gen. Bob Elder, so I would like to personally salute

Gen. Keys because his influence is going to be felt for many, many years even after his service finishes. So, sir, thank you so much for your help (Applause.)

So here's another area where you can help. Tell the nation that the age of cyber warfare is here. It needs a warrior look. It needs the principles of war in cyber apply. Our opponents are already committed—it is vital that we as a nation commit the men and women and resources to fight in this domain. Your Air Force has stepped forward to pick up part of this burden because our technological savvy frankly positions us to do so and we must not shirk our duty. Indeed the vulnerability of our systems, the systems that the Air Force operates, forces us to do so. What I would urge you to do is tell this story, get out front. It is not a only a law domain, it is a warfighting domain and we better step up to the plate, and we better understand it.

I've told you already that war has caused us to delay recapitalizing our inventory. Last year I told you what this had meant for our tankers and why this has made them a No. 1 procurement priority. Frankly, 50 years ago Curtis LeMay asked for a 30 percent increase in the Air Force budget to secure strategic air. These tankers and bombers gave the United States global reach. We've put off their replacement, only offering modest improvements. The result has been an inexorable decay in readiness as we watch the sons and many times the grandchildren of the original pilots fly airplanes that were requested during the 1950s. Over the last two years we've taken bold steps to build up enough capital to recapitalize. We've asked our airmen to restructure, to become more efficient, and we reduced our force size considerably to make this happen. We continue to feel that with this plus other actions we can make our recapitalization dream come true.

In effect, we sort of took a vow of poverty, but it appears that it is not enough, though we have in fact altered the slope of the line, we continued to age our aircraft and our satellites. We need help from the other sides of the three-legged stool. We need help in retiring older aircraft. We need help in gaining efficiencies that are brought to us by Air Force Smart Operations 21. The cost of maintaining our aging inventory is essentially sucking down some of the money we should be spending that we saved. We are fearful that we are eating the seed corn of the future. We rang the bell and we sent up a yellow star cluster. We very much hope that here the Air Force Association can pick up the cry and bring some truth home. In order to recapitalize our aging inventory we need the nation to understand that we must first decommission some aircraft. Again we need your help. KC-X is currently in source selection. We need for you to explain to the nation the expense of maintaining our old inventory might prohibit us from accelerating and buying these new airplanes. If they want a strategic Air Force in the future, they must allow us to take prudent actions now.

Beyond these programs I'm happy to tell you that we are pushing the edge of technology. Let me take just a short moment and tell you about why the future of the Air Force is as bright as ever. Earlier I spoke briefly about the importance of information on the modern battlefield. We are pioneering technologies that create true joint spherical situation awareness. By spherical situation awareness I mean an integrated battlefield in which all of the sensors in a given region—space, air, land, and sea—are networked and integrated.

In an age where information is in fact becoming power, these new capabilities will vastly increase our ability to fight as they come online.

On another front, if you've been following the news, you may have noticed that the Air Force recently certified our B-52H to fly on synthetic fuel. Let me tell you what this is about. This is about changing the environment in which we will fight. This is about hedging against the costs. You all probably don't know that every 10 dollars in a barrel of oil costs the Air Force some 665 million dollars of our budget, so yes, this is about trying to restrain cost growth, hedge against these higher costs, we're preparing our inventory to fly on clean viable alternative fuels by 2011. We're asking Congress to allow us to make a market because we are going to be buyers; we are not going to be producers. We think there's a lot of various alternative fuels that we should bring to bear on this problem, but we are focused on the alternative fuels that we are using.

We're also making great strides in other areas. We are keeping our edge in aircraft technology. We will need new and better engines and materials. You will see in the hall downstairs those technologies that we are questing after proudly on display by some of the finest scientists and engineers that America can bring to bear on problems. We need new and better engines and materials. Currently, we're using only about a third of our atmosphere. We are now working to develop hypersonic scramjets to speed our airplanes and as first stages to put payloads into space. We're looking into new carbon fiber composites for stronger and lighter airplanes. We're working on different engines, adjustable ventilation and HEET engines to advance our next generation bombers. In short, we're making sure that our Air Force continues to be recognized as the nation's technological leader both now and into the future.

I'll conclude with this: over 60 years ago, Winston Churchill said, "For good or for ill, air mastery today is the supreme expression of military power, and fleets and armies, however vital and important, must accept a subordinate rank." At the age of 60, we are still a young service, and a service that remembers our heroes. They push us, they prod us, sometimes now they e-mail us. Today we are pushing the limits of where they want us to go. The mission of the United States Air Force is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests—to fly and fight in air and space and cyberspace. We are doing this and thanks to our airmen and organizations like the Air Force Association, we are fulfilling that mission in a strong way. But as I have said numerous times today, we need your help. You have the insight to tell our story. You can tell the nation why decisions made today will determine what the world will look like in the next several decades. We need for you to remind America that if they want their children and grandchildren to enjoy the peaceful system that we have all become accustomed to, we must consider that the investment in the Air Force's strategic reach, vigilance, and power today is the best insurance policy.

Again and again, associations like the Air Force Association have proved their value to the Air Force and to the nation so on this 60th anniversary, the 61st anniversary actually of the Air Force Association, you provide us a great foundation and the face we show to the nation. Thank you to our civic leaders, thank you to our global air chiefs. May God

bless you and may God continue to bless the peace we bring to the world. Thank you very much. (Applause.)