Geographical and technological battlefields cover the world and characterize our times. The Communist challenge is an immensely broad one. Our flexible Air Force, prepared today and preparing for tomorrow, must be ready to meet every facet of this challenge . . .

The US Air Force—Today and Tomorrow

By Eugene M. Zuckert
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

If anyone had told me fifteen years ago that tonight I would be giving this state of the Air Force message as its Secretary at this meeting, I would have dismissed the prediction as incredible. I cannot truly express my appreciation of the privilege of standing here in this role tonight.

The Air Force has expanded rapidly because it had men of vision and capacity at its head when it first became a dominant force for shaping world peace. The strange and fortunate thing was that the stature and ability of those who guided its explosive progress in critical days—Bob Lovett, Hap Arnold, Stuart Symington, and Tooey Spaatz—characterized at its best the complementary civilian and military leadership called for by the ideal working of our system of government. Believe me, Curt LeMay and I work every day of our lives to seek to maintain our partnership in that same tradition.

Besides my personal gratification at being here as the civilian head of our great Air Force, it is a source of deep satisfaction to participate in the Air Force Association's Awards Banquet.

Your Association, through its firm devotion to the cause of airpower, has materially increased the chances of our success in the desperate struggle for peace. You have accelerated national consciousness of the essentiality of airpower, whether airplanes, missiles, or —

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There are two principal elements of the flexibility which the Air Force is seeking to provide. Both of these are part of the function of support for the Army. In order for the ground troops to be able to fight anywhere in the world, they need an airlift capability much in excess of that for which we had planned. In the last few months we have taken firm steps in the direction of meeting the need. We have bought new transports; we have strengthened our arrangements for utilizing the capability of the civil air fleet; we have taken the first steps to bring into being the newest and most modern military transport. These are but the beginning, because we intend to continue our emphasis upon this kind of support.

The Army also relies upon the Air Force for the necessary close air support to assist the ground troops. For some years, in accordance with the philosophy of our defense planning, the emphasis upon tactical air had diminished. This trend has been reversed—we are determined to find better and more imaginative ways of providing tactical air support. We will devote resources to strengthening tactical air in being.

This job will require—and will receive—the closest working arrangement with the Army. The new unified command established by Secretary McNamara this week, leading to a new type fighting unit made up of elements of the Army's STRAC and our TAC, will speed the improvements we seek. It will provide a new high-performance striking force, with a global mobility and fighting strength across the spectrum of warfare.

At the same time that we are concerning ourselves with the pressing problems of today and tomorrow—airlift, tactical air, and the indispensable elements of strategic nuclear striking power, missiles and aircraft—we are devoting ourselves to an area in which the military requirements are just beginning to appear. I refer, of course, to space.

America must push forward into the frontiers of space. Our trip to the moon is not merely a trip, but a means of pushing the exploration of outer space with all the potential that this has for mankind. We cannot allow any power to dominate outer space with the implications that such space superiority could lead to a deadly military disadvantage to this country.

These Air Force jobs of today, tomorrow, and the day after certainly present as difficult an array of management problems as any organization has ever faced. We are seeking to be self-critical and constructive in our analysis of how we might do the job better.

For example, we have been particularly concerned with the manner in which our weapon systems are acquired. The implications of modern technology are such that billions of dollars are involved in the full-scale development of any new weapon system. Although we believe that we have made great strides, we are not content with our own organization or our own techniques. The reorganization of the Air Force Systems Command last spring was an attempt to get at the heart of some of the problems within our own house. It is but a start.

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We are also looking to industry for improvement in its performance in fulfilling our demand for the incredibly complex devices that constitute the sinews of a modern war machine. American industry’s enormous contribution to our defense posture, and the unprecedented depth of its knowledge and participation, make me confident that industry will respond constructively.

The seriousness of our problem is indicated by the fact that one petty mistake of procedure in testing a new missile can cost millions of dollars if the weapon blows up on the pad because of it. It is, of course, impossible to expect perfect performance in the environment of a racing technology. Nonetheless, we are convinced that better methods of contracting and the motivation induced by more imaginative contracting philosophy can be employed to obtain substantially improved results. We are taking steps to achieve these objectives.

Three areas are particularly deserving of attention—reliability, cost, and business responsibility.

Reliability, in simplest terms, means delivery when promised of a product that will work as advertised. Slippage on either count denies to the nation a part of its defense capability.

But we must have reliability and timely delivery at costs which don’t threaten to price us out of the weapon systems business. In this day of sophisticated weaponry, the challenge is clear.

There must be a joint Air Force and industry response to this challenge. The same compulsions and initiative which produce profits from timely delivery of reliable products in commerce must be brought to bear on government work. The designation of defense business should not abrogate normal business responsibility. We must make sure that our business relationship is stimulative and productive of the best in American industry. We are far from that goal.

The things I have discussed tonight acquire an underlined importance because of the momentous events we are witnessing in the world today. Whether your thoughts turn to Berlin, Southeast Asia, or the nuclear test sites in Russia, you see a world of nuclear blackmail, violation of compacts among nations, inspired civil wars, subversion, and aggression. All of these are truly disheartening in a world that had good cause to think it had seen the end of war.

But these are facts, and if we are to survive—certainly to survive as a great power—we must devote our energies and abilities to dealing with the implications of these facts in a world where there is no longer any security in distance.

In such a world, our Air Force is a vital part of our defense establishment and should be a great reassurance. We in the Air Force will continue to strive to deserve the resources provided us—to sustain a worthy response to the determination of the American people to maintain aerospace power to defend freedom.—Eno

On US aerospace strength depends the survival of the free world. Essential to maintenance of this strength today is recognition within the Air Force itself that . . .

‘Aerospace Power Is INDIVISIBLE’

By Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, USAF
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

I AM VERY pleased to be here in Philadelphia for the Fifteenth Anniversary Convention and Aerospace Panorama. I know I am among friends, and that makes my participation a special pleasure.

Each of us here recognizes the seriousness of the world situation. And we know that in these times no one can be a passive participant in national defense. That is why we are here. That is why this Association was formed.

Each year the Association seems to do the impossible by having a larger and more interesting Panorama. As a result of your efforts, the thousands of people who visit the exhibits and attend the meetings will come away with an increased understanding of aerospace power and greater faith in American technology.

Many key topics will be discussed in the next few days. Out of the Convention seminars, briefings, panels, and speeches will come a report to the nation that I feel sure will be reassuring. It will constitute a (Continued on page 67)
in warning to those who threaten the peace of the world.

Never before in our nation’s history have we as a people been more patient and more determined to stand together to meet aggression. Because this is true have not chosen to discuss hardware nor review the status of our over-all aerospace power. We are confident of our strength. The free world walks softly but only to meet any threat.

Our present strength and its effect on world events far surpasses anything more than ever the necessity for strong defense forces, not only today, but in the future. This is a winning situation and a problem I intend to touch on later this afternoon.

But there is another problem that I want to discuss. It is a matter of high priority. It is a problem I feel the Air Force Association can work with us to solve. I say this because you are part of the Air Force family—a strong and vital part—and your assistance is both welcome and needed.

This problem is a matter of great concern to aerospace unity—because the strength of our aerospace power comes through unity of purpose and organization.

A very knowledgeable reporter stated recently that the early 1950s he felt he knew what the Air Force stood for, but today he doesn’t. His statement puzzled me. It also alarmed me because understanding our doctrine and concepts is basic and important to our defense.

Deterrence of aggression is composed of three basic elements—forces in being, public understanding of this force, and national determination to use the force if necessary. These are the three elements that make our force credible to our friends and to our enemies. If any of them is missing, credibility suffers proportionately.

Without understanding I don’t think we can have the necessary degree of determination. And, of course, credibility is nil without these two elements. Now if this reporter, who has been close to aerospace power for many years, is not clear in his own mind as to just exactly where we stand today, it seems only reasonable that less informed people may be even more confused.

Is the public confused? If it is, how has it happened?

Admittedly, the Air Force has always had a variety of thinking within its own ranks. This is to be expected in a dynamic environment. We have been directly affected by revolutionary technology. New developments have brought changes in emphasis in our defense posture.

Other factors also enter the picture: changing national strategy and, of course, the budget. Within the Air Force we have had, in addition to differences of opinion between missile, fighter, and bomber people, the strategic, tactical, and air defense concepts. Then, on the other hand there are the general-war and limited-war schools of thought and philosophic divisions on types of deterrence. You can add to this some additional confusion about our conventional-war role and capability.

Possibly this variety of views is why the sharply defined picture that we presented in the early 1950s has become fuzzy to some people.

Yet our basic concept has remained firm through the years. National security requires that we build, maintain, and modernize our aerospace power, and that we emphasize forces that can survive an attack and react with war-waging and war-winning capabilities. Today, for the first time in history, we can be directly attacked by strong aerospace forces. Therefore, the Air Force believes the greatest danger to our national survival is the direct threat against the United States itself. By preparing for this threat we believe that our strength also deters lesser conflicts for ourselves and for our allies.

But if there is some confusion today as to how we stand, we do indeed have a serious situation. If we do nothing more at this Convention than to clarify our position, I think it will be of great benefit to the public and to the Air Force.

I think we have been consistent in our concepts since the formation of the General Headquarters Air Force in 1935. Our basic doctrine has remained generally unchanged since that time. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, the first commander of the GHQ Air Force, was outspoken on the subject of airpower. It was at this time that our new concept of air warfare was gaining attention. General Andrews held that national security could best be attained by building offensive rather than defensive capabilities.

History, of course, has proven the validity of the concept. We have had in war dramatic examples of the decisiveness of airpower. Possibly by retracing history from the middle ’30s, we can gain an insight into the cause of public confusion about our present doctrine.

Until the formation of the GHQ Air Force, our air units were not in a cohesive organizational structure. This new command consisted of three wings in the ZI. Each wing was composed of all elements of airpower—bombardment, pursuit, attack, and reconnaissance. We were small, usually situated on the same base, and we worked together. We came to know each other, and we understood and appreciated the contributions each made to total airpower.

In those days we identified ourselves with the Air Corps. We had unit loyalty, but we were “Air Corps.”

World War II brought tremendous growth. Wings became commands and then grew to be numbered Air Forces. Individuals became specialized and to a degree lost their understanding and appreciation of the contributions of the other complementary elements of airpower. For example, it soon became common to hear airmen refer to themselves first as “Eighth Air Force,” secondly as “Air Corps.” Each of the numbered Air Forces, you remember, had a distinctive shoulder patch. When we became a separate service, we adopted a new uniform and received many protests against the prohibition of shoulder patches. However, we found that we accrued a dividend in our determination to have an uncluttered uniform. It was impossible to tell visually whether an airman or officer was in SAC, TAC, ADC, or the other Commands.

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This condition exists today.

Visually, there is no difference in the blue suits.

But once he begins talking, the individual more often than not will quickly inform his listener that he is in a specific Command.

And sometimes an individual inherits this Command identification without any great effort on his own part. I think I can be considered a prime example of this. Because of my service in the Strategic Air Command, a lot of people think I am only interested in big bombers and have little faith in or use for missiles, tactical airpower, air defense, and the many other essential elements that go to make up total aerospace power. This most emphatically is not true.

I seek weapon systems that I think can do the best job and afford the nation the most protection. I am a military conservative in that I believe we shouldn't discard a proven, reliable weapon system or concept unless we have something that is able to replace it and do a better job. In short, I believe in having protection along with progress.

Identification with a Command is not confined solely to the people now in service. The same tendency is apparent among former Air Force men and other people in civilian life who are earnest supporters of aerospace power.

As you recall, when we became a separate service, we organized into Commands so we could manage our resources more effectively. We did not consider, however, that the functions of the different Commands were separate and autonomous. They were all part of the Air Force and mutually supporting. We in effect gained our independence through public understanding and conviction that all elements contributed to the entire broad spectrum of aerospace power.

During our growing stages there was strong emphasis on Command identification. To a point this was and is needed and desirable. But it must not go to the point where it contributes to an impression that the United States Air Force is a conglomeration of forces, that each type of aerospace power is separate from the other and incapable of action outside a specified role. This gives the impression of inflexibility and nothing could be farther from the truth.

Aerospace power offers the ultimate in flexibility.

The ability to use it for different purposes and to concentrate it swiftly for a primary purpose, if need be, is one of its greatest assets.

Now, if we in our natural enthusiasm have contributed to a cloudy picture, it is time we take some swift and positive action to correct this impression. Since deterrence is credible only if there is understanding and determination, this calls for even greater unity on our part as we advance into the future.

Today, the Air Force is specialized. Many of our people have to specialize in one field due to the growing complexity of weapon systems. As a result, they often remain in one Command for most of their careers and do not get the broad background that was received several decades ago. This trend will become more pronounced in the future. I do not advocate a return to the so-called good old days. I merely point out that technology has tended to multiply the number of parts in our Air Force. Our problem then, as we reach higher and farther, is to maintain our unity of mission and unity as an organization as we approach operational tasks in space. We must keep firmly in mind the fact that aerospace power is indivisible. This is stated in our basic doctrine. This basic doctrine hasn't changed over the years, not because our doctrine has become dogma, but because this principle has stood the test of time and experience.

And we still have the same concept: The purpose of aerospace power is to deter attack against us and if we are attacked, to destroy the enemy's means to wage war.

This requires aerospace offensive and defensive forces capable of defeating the aggressor's offensive and defensive force. Only this kind of superior aerospace force can continue to be a credible deterrent against attack.

This force should consist of both manned and unmanned weapon systems to give flexible and diverse power. Parallel development and procurement of manned and unmanned systems is therefore mandatory as we update the forces in line with technological developments.

Today, at this moment, the Regular establishment—your United States Air Force—and your Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units are at an all-time peak of combat readiness.

Through common purpose, mutual understanding and respect, we are capable and ready.

In closing, I believe we should do these things to ensure that the Air Force remains an effective instrument of national security: First, we must have timely modernization of our aerospace forces; and we must act with vision and daring to exploit technology so as to achieve distinct strategic advantages.

Secondly, we must positively reaffirm our basic concepts. To be a credible deterrent, aerospace power must consist of flexible and diversified forces that have a war-waging and war-winning capability.

And third, we need to restate firmly that the United States Air Force is an entity whose elements all contribute to the aerospace power that is vital for our defense.

Not far from this very spot, in 1776, our infant nation made its Declaration of Independence. I ask you that here at this Convention we make a declaration of unity so that we may best serve for the common good of our nation.—END

The above article is General LeMay's address to the Fifteenth Anniversary Luncheon at the AFA Convention, Philadelphia on September 21. General LeMay became USAF Chief of Staff on July 1 of this year, after serving for years as Vice Chief under Gen. Thomas D. White. Before that he was Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command. In World War II he served in the Eighth Air Force before transferring to the Pacific to head the B-29 bomb effort against the Japanese homeland. A profile of General LeMay, "Global Organization Man," by Claude Witz, appears in the September issue of Air Force Magazine.