

**Statement by Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.)
on the House of Representatives floor, July 16, 2008.**

AIR FORCE GENERAL MOSELEY AND SECRETARY WYNNE
SHOULD BE HONORED, NOT FIRED

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. *Stearns*) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the June 5 forced resignations of Air Force Secretary Michael W. Wynne and Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley represent the first time in United States history the top uniformed and civilian leaders of any service were ousted simultaneously. The actions of Secretary of Defense Gates are totally unprecedented and deserve deeper scrutiny and inquiry.

Successful leaders must focus on today's problems while simultaneously anticipating future challenges. The tenures of Moseley and Wynne were defined by these characteristics. They cultivated a service that was second to none.

Moseley and Wynne developed and employed new technology, such as the unmanned aerial vehicles that are yielding unparalleled effects on the battlefield. They also recognized that the Air Force has to adapt to a changing world, and they directed the service to build competencies in new areas such as cyberspace and alternative fuels. And finally, Wynne and Moseley took action to re-capitalize the Air Force's aging fleet with a wide array of assets, including the tanker, the F-22, and the next generation bombers. These are steps that will prove essential as the service confronts future challenges.

Secretary Gates' real reasons for the firing of Secretary Wynne and General Moseley may never be known. However, I have come to believe that his stated reasons do not necessarily match up with reality. The publicly stated reason was primarily because of the violation in sending nuclear control units to Taiwan. Perhaps the real reason for the firings is because of disagreements on the strategic defense of this Nation.

The parts that were in violation were removed from the nuclear control list in 1991. The parts shipped were just special lamps. Moseley and Wynne had approved a correction on this matter and were spending over \$1 billion to make those corrections. If Secretary Gates, or others in the Pentagon, had some concerns, they could have voiced those concerns much earlier.

In addition, it is important for the Secretary to release the full report by Admiral Kirkland Donald, who investigated the case of the mistaken shipment to Taiwan. Admiral Donald's findings directly led to the firing of Moseley and Wynne, and the report should be made public as soon as possible. I call on the Secretary tonight to make this report public.

Now, there have been reports that Moseley and Wynne constantly clashed with the Secretary of Defense's office over greater procurement of the F-22. In order to avoid a showdown with the Air Force, the Defense Department decided that instead of closing down the F-22 line, it would restrict how many planes the Air Force could buy and leave the ultimate decision to the next administration.

The F-22 will serve as replacements for the aging F-117s and F-15s. The Air Force needs a minimum of 381 F-22s to fill out its 10 air and space expeditionary forces. However, it has been authorized funds for only 183. As a result, the Air Force must keep selected F-15s and F-16s in service much longer than had been expected. Mostly and Wynne fought hard for the F-22 against the wishes of Secretary Gates and his office.

Now, considering the impressive record of General Moseley and Secretary Wynne, one must ask why they were forced to resign. While I certainly understand and share the Secretary's concern regarding the Air Force's control over its nuclear inventory, I think the reason for the firings extends far past his publicly stated reason.

We had a clash of philosophies here. Moseley and Wynne were not leaders that were content with simply toeing the line for today. They were pushing

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hard for the future. This garnered much criticism, with many suggesting that it is impossible to adequately focus on today's challenges if one is also thinking about the future. That's what Secretary Gates believed. He even went so far as to deliver a speech where he disparagingly termed this concept as "next-waritis." Is it not the responsibility of the Secretary of Defense to plan for the future defense of this Nation?

Many mistakes that Moseley and Wynne were blamed for can be laid squarely at the feet of the Pentagon leadership. Without a real commitment from the Secretary of Defense' office, many of those problems will persist. To ignore this trend is simply irresponsible. General Moseley and Secretary Wynne understood this. Unfortunately, it led to their dismissal.

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Responsible military leaders do not have the luxury of focusing on the present at the expense of the future. Failure to anticipate, adopt and learn

lies at the core of military disasters. Given the stakes, "next-war-it is" is a sacred duty, not a reason for decapitating the leadership of the Air Force. History has taught us repeatedly that those who solely fixate on today's problems will be woefully unprepared to address tomorrow's challenges. Iraq and Afghanistan are obviously important, but we must also respond to global trends and realize that future wars may not always mirror our past conflicts.

We must support our military leaders who aggressively tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. Firing Moseley and Wynne for taking this comprehensive view is simply irresponsible and sets a disastrous precedent. Instead, we owe them a debt of gratitude for all they did to help win today's fight and help the nation posture for the future. They understood the complex array of challenges facing the country and I stand resolute in my support for continuing this encompassing approach--the nation cannot afford to consider any other option.

Many of the mistakes that Moseley and Wynne were blamed for can be laid squarely at the feet of the Pentagon leadership. Without a real commitment from the Secretary of Defense's office, many of these problems will persist. We cannot ask aircrews to fly in combat missions if their airplanes are falling out of the sky due to structural fatigue. We cannot afford the cost of inefficiencies within the Department of Defense that is created by unnecessary overlap in roles and missions. We cannot ask our Airmen to undertake missions if they are not supported with adequate budgets to facilitate those missions that we as a nation ask them to fulfill.

To ignore these trends is simply irresponsible and could prove devastating for the nation. It takes an immense amount of time, planning, and resources to posture for these challenges and we will not have the luxury of any of these elements when what was once a seemingly distant future threat becomes a critical challenge for today. General Moseley and Secretary Wynne understood this. Unfortunately, it led to their dismissals.

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