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Well, thank you so much, Kathy.

I live a blessed life. And one of the reasons I live a blessed life is because of the airmen I have an opportunity to work with, particularly my wingman, Dave Goldfein, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force. I could not have asked for better; and he will be speaking with us this afternoon on space war fighting.

But it's not just him. When I looked down that front row this morning, it is hard to believe the amount of talent in the United States Air Force. General Jay Raymond, who has been nominated and I hope soon will be the Commander of the United States Space Force. And John Hyten, who was nominated this morning to be our next Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

About two weeks ago, airmen at the 11th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Air Force Base, about an hour and a half north of here, detected and warned of a missile launch from Abdul Kalam Island off the eastern coast of India. It flew for three minutes before making impact with an Indian satellite about 300 kilometers above the Earth -- three minutes from launch, detection, to impact.

The Combined Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base immediately began tracking and cataloging about 270 pieces of debris bigger than 10 centimeters. India's space program started in the early 1960s but last month they became the fourth nation ever to demonstrate anti-satellite capabilities.

The significant shift we have accomplished in the Air Force over the past two years is driven by a clear-eyed assessment of the world as it is. China is deploying satellite jammers, operationally-based anti-satellite weapons, and directed energy weapons. Russia is developing ground launch missiles, directed energy weapons, and sophisticated satellites to interfere with our satellites on orbit.

Why are they doing this? Because America is the best in the world at space and our adversaries know it.

To remain dominant in space we recognize the need to change our strategies and our programs supporting those strategies. We've accomplished much over the last two years but there is still much more to do. One of the things we must continue to do is to deepen our alliances and establish new partnerships in space. You know, last night I met with several of the national representatives who are here in the audience today who are emerging space nations.

Space has become a common domain for human endeavor. The cost of launch has plummeted, the size of payloads has declined, and technical advances have made space more accessible and more useful to more countries than ever before.

Last year, I announced that we would open the doors at our National Space Security Institute to share a space education and training with current and emerging allies and partners. Combined classes start this summer from introductory all the way up to advanced levels.

Last July, we opened the Combined Space Operations Center, the CSpOC, where allied space forces execute command and control operations around the globe in a variety of missions, including missile warning, position navigation and timing, and space defense.

In January, for the first time ever, we certified and awarded space wings to three Canadian officers.

And last February, our acquisition team at the Space and Missile Systems Center came up with an innovative plan to solve a problem: to extend protected tactical satellite communications to the polar region through 2030, not by doing it ourselves, but by working with Norway. In 2022, Space Norway will launch two U.S. payloads on their communications satellites, avoiding a two-year gap in polar communications coverage.

But it's not just countries where we are developing new partnerships. We're doing the same with industry. We will not win a -- against a rapidly innovating adversary with an acquisition system from the Cold War. We are driving changes to field tomorrow's Air Force faster and smarter.

Last summer, we set a goal for ourselves. We decided we were going to strip 100 years of unnecessary schedule time out of Air Force program plans. A hundred years. So far, we've stripped out almost 80 years. The interesting thing is, 21 1/2 of those years were in space programs -- space programs alone.

And much of the credit for that work goes to the Space and Missile Systems Center. We are using new authorities given to us by the Congress to build and test and deploy things faster. Those authorities have been given back to the services because the Congress understood that we cannot centralize control if we're going to meet a rapidly innovating adversary.

We must be able to move acquisition at speed. The Air Force canceled our seventh and eighth missile warning satellites to create more survivable alternatives using the new authorities that Congress gave us. And we reduced the acquisition time for next generation missile warning by 3 1/2 years to hit the target that the Combatant Commander needed from us. Last September, we used these new authorities to get new communications to the Navy carrier strike groups 18 months earlier, closing a critical gap for the fleet. With the support of the Congress, the services are driving forward to use the new authorities we've been given.

You know, when I was a member of Congress, I used to talk a lot -- about acquisition reform. It's a lot harder to do it than to talk about it. The Air Force is doing it. We've flattened Space and Missile Systems Center and removed layers -- pre-layers of bureaucracy, fewer checkers checking the checkers, as General John Thompson, the Director of SMC likes to say. We stood up three program executive offices and gave program executive officers full decision authority over their programs: PEO space development, PEO space production, and PEO space enterprise.

The Congress gave responsibility back to the services to buy equipment. I have kept no authority at my level because I know that I add absolutely no value to those decisions. What I do add is time. I want program managers spending time managing their programs and not managing the Pentagon. This new organizational structure at SMC streamlines decision-making and will move concepts from the back of an envelope to the payload envelope faster and smarter.

But it doesn't stop there.

We have stood up the Space Rapid Capabilities Office. It was ordered in the last National Defense Authorization Bill. We have hired its new director and its board has started its first three classified projects.

And last month in New York City, we held our inaugural Pitch Day. We invited entrepreneurs, universities, and start-ups to pitch revolutionary solutions to some of our complicated problems. The idea was no more than five pages in a pitch deck. We got over 400 proposals and we selected 59 companies to pitch their ideas to government and industry and investors in New York. We awarded 51 contracts in one day valued at over eight million dollars. And the average time to close a deal on a one-page contract with the United States Air Force was 15 minutes. The record was three minutes -- three minutes to contract with the Air Force, and the guy who did it said, "You know, it's faster to work with the Air Force than to get a beer at a bar in New York City."

A big shout out to the guy who made it possible. I know his first name is Scott. He works for Bank of America. He was on the phone with us all day because we made those first 3 1/2 million dollars of payments with the swipe of a government credit card and we had to convince them we were not laundering money for the drug cartels.

Today, I'm announcing we're going further. We're going to extend this concept. I'm announcing Pitch Day for Space. It'll be hosted in Los Angeles this fall and will bring the Air Force together with entrepreneurs and universities and start-ups who want to help drive path-breaking capabilities to space at the speed of relevance.

Y'all are welcome.

We're engaging innovative businesses like never before. Our Space Enterprise Consortium under the Space and Missile Systems Center is removing barriers to entry for small businesses and non-traditional vendors. And those companies in the Space Enterprise Consortium now make up, those innovative companies, are 80% of the 277 partner organizations in that consortium. That consortium has now awarded contracts for over 200 million dollars in value. And of those 37 contracts awarded, nine are to non-traditional companies as the prime contractor -- companies like SEAKR Engineering, Blue Canyon Technologies, Millennium Space Systems, VMware, Carahsoft, and [unclear]. They're cost-effectively prototyping satellite, rocket, and cyber technologies for the United States military.

The very first award went to Millennium Space Systems to develop a small satellite called Tetra [ph] to demonstrate tactics, techniques, and procedures for small satellites in geosynchronous orbit at 22,000 miles above the Earth. Millennium is on track to deliver Tetra-1 just 12 months after the contract started.

Our Space and Missile Systems Center is awarding prototype contracts in 90 days, twice as fast as anyone else in the Defense Department.

We are the best in the world in space.

Our missile warning satellites detect rocket launches and calculate where they're going in near real-time.

We monitor and predict the weather from the South Pole to the North Pole and everywhere in between.

We operate global satellite communications ensuring the President can give orders to field commanders any place, any time.

Thirty-three of our satellites deliver the position, navigation, and timing for the world, and provide the timing signal for the ATMs and the New York Stock Exchange.

If you needed GPS directions to find a restaurant this week, you can thank about 40 airmen sitting 20 miles from here at Schriever Air Force Base. They provide GPS to the world, to a billion people everyday, and their average age is 22. It's terrifying.

Our experience and our knowledge of space has never been more critical. The United States is making bold moves to ensure that our nation can protect our assets on orbit and prevail in conflict, if called upon. Last December, the President signed an order to reestablish an independent space command to focus on space war fighting. It was an idea unanimously supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and we expect confirmation hearings -- hearings soon for Jay Raymond.

But there is more to do.

On March 1st, at the direction of the President, the Defense Department forwarded draft legislation to the Congress to establish the new Space Force as a sixth branch of the U.S. Armed Forces under the United States Air Force. The new force will have a civilian Under-Secretary of the Air Force for Space and a four-star Space Force Chief of Staff who will be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Air Force has been given the task of planning for the establishment of this force so that we can move out smartly when the legislation is passed by the Congress later this year.

Our ability to dominate in space depends on having stable budgets, and I want to thank the United States Congress for delivering an on-time budget last year. Those resources ensure that our space capabilities do not degrade. This Administration has prioritized space in every year of the President's budget. Budgets over the last three years have been bold and they support the Combatant Commander requirements in the need to compete in an era of great power competition.

The fiscal year 2018 budget was a 20% increase over 2017. We increased it again in 2019. And our fiscal year '20 budget proposal -- the President is proposing an Air Force Space budget of 13.7 billion dollars in unclassified space programs, a 17% increase over last year's all-time high, in order to further accelerate our ability to operate and dominate in space.

Threat drives strategy and strategy drives concepts of operation for structure and needed programs to exercise those strategies. Two years ago, the Air Force guided an effort to shift air and space capabilities toward a contested domain. It was a comprehensive review of our space architecture and strategies. The programs that we have added to the budget over the last three years were based on that assessment of the threat and aligned with the most effective strategies to meet that threat.

Last month, the Air Force completed a space strategy 90-day study to validate and update the work that was done two years ago. While it was led by the Air Force, it was a whole of government effort and a whole of DoD effort that included the Joint Staff, all services, DARPA, the NRO, and all of the relevant OSD offices, as well as combatant commands.

We looked at all of our missions in space, from missile warning to communications and intelligence collection. We took the best estimates of the threat and presumed a thinking adversary who will respond to the actions that we take. We embedded red teams to push ourselves on our own assumptions. And we ran thousands of iterations of war games and simulations in different phases of conflict with different potential future architectures to decide what we need for the future.

We particularly looked at ways to capitalize on low cost, low-Earth orbit commercially-based systems. We will be briefing the full results of this study across the government in the coming months. But there are a few things I can share here:

First, different missions will require different solutions. One size does not fit all.

Second, increasing the numbers of satellites helps but numbers alone are not enough.

Third, the Congress directed a shift to the Air Force to buy all commercial satellite communication services for the entire Defense Department that was effective in December of last year. That will be a tremendous help as there is very clear synergy between commercial communication satellite capabilities and those of the Defense Department.

Fourth, a very useful role of the Department of Defense-wide level will be to drive all services and all equipment toward low-cost, multiband satellite communication terminals.

And fifth, the study also found that space missions that are not well-aligned with commercial, low-Earth orbit satellites are actually better off staying where they are or making other changes to protect themselves.

Now, obviously, I cannot go into great detail here about this extensive and important piece of work, but when I was taking the briefing on this first -- my first briefing on this just recently, I couldn't help but think of H.L. Mencken. He once wrote that "for every complex problem, there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong."

Let me be clear: The United States Air Force is funding the development of low-Earth orbit systems and commercially-based systems for some of our missions. But launching hundreds of cheap satellites a year as a substitute for the complex architectures, where we provide capabilities to the war fighter, will result in failure on America's worst day if we rely upon them alone. The analysis shows that clearly. Our responsibility is to provide the President options during all phases of conflict so that America continues to dominate in space.

In 1957, General Benny Shriever gave a seminal speech on the future of space. He'd been a pilot in the Air Force and he flew with air power icons like Ira Eaker and "Tooey" Spaatz and "Hap" Arnold. He understood air superiority but he also had the vision to look beyond the capabilities of the time. He spoke of a future when battles might be fought in space, battles that would need advanced space technologies. In his remarks, he said, "In the long haul, our safety as a nation may depend on our achieving space superiority."

We had space superiority during the first Gulf War when Captain Dave Goldfein went to the desert and I was on the National Security Council staff. It was the first time that airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines recognized the value of our space systems on their missions. It was the first space war.

We didn't plan for the first Gulf War to happen. We responded to an act of Iraqi aggression. All those space systems, navigation, weather, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance that marked a monumental shift in how we fight as a nation and as a coalition were already in place when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

Should a future conflict extend into space, we will need new, survivable, capable systems already in place. We must strengthen the bonds we have with our allies and partners; field systems faster and smarter; and continuously fight for the title of best in the world at space.

We will defend our values. We will defend our way of life. And we will defend the nation that we love.

God bless you all.