The Air Force Chief of Staff, speaking at the Anniversary Luncheon during the AFA Convention, pointed to a counterforce capability, the mixed strategic force needed to make it work, a sound posture of tactical and defensive airpower, and USAF achievements and plans in space as the most important of . . .

THE INGREDIENTS OF EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE

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

I WANT first of all to congratulate the Air Force Association on its continuing and increasing contribution to a wider understanding of aerospace power.

Your traditional awards program accents our increasing need for professionalism and enhances the pride of service in our people. I am told that beginning the first of October you will also join us in the Silver Wings observance commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the award of the first Military Aviator's Badges. That observance will call deserved attention to the achievements of aircrew members. It will recognize their continuity of effort and experience as defenders of our national interests in the expanding operational medium of aerospace.

Your lectures and symposiums at this conference are helping to clarify the national security implications of technical advances in aerospace operations.

Therefore, I welcome this opportunity to look down the road with you at some of the things that affect the *direction* and the *pace* of Air Force efforts to broaden our deterrent base.

To put these in perspective, I'm going to touch first on the key transition periods we have come through since World War II.

Following that war, the Air Force, with the atomic bomb, was the service best able to protect the free world against the threat of Soviet military aggression.

During that period the basic decision was to build up the Strategic Air Command. This was done on a priority basis.

That course of action was widely upheld as the most effective deterrent to major aggression. In fact, Churchill pointed out in 1949 that the atom bomb in American hands prevented the communization of Europe.

In addition, we knew then, and events later verified, that the emphasis on our strategic forces alone could not provide all of the capabilities we needed.

In the early 1950s, conflicts in Korea and Indochina confirmed this and increased the pressure for broadening and improving our war-fighting potential.

At the same time it was becoming more obvious every day that the Soviets would not require the once-estimated generation or more to develop a strategic offensive capability of their own.

By 1955, they were capable of striking the heart of North America with nuclear-armed heavy and medium jet bombers.

Beginning in 1957, the Soviets' unexpected rate of technical progress in the missile and space field brought a further shift in the power balance.

This new capability, in the hands of a potential enemy, placed in question both the *direction* and the *pace* of our military effort. Let's consider first the direction in which we moved.

As a fundamental step in maintaining an effective deterrent posture, it was necessary to enhance our counterforce capability. This counterforce strategy had been designed primarily to confront the enemy with certain destruction of his military force in case he attacked the free world. This was essential to effective deterrence. In turn, the objective in event of a nuclear war was—and is today—to limit damage to the United States and our allies, and terminate the war on terms favorable to our nation.

Placing emphasis on a counterforce posture has led to US strategic forces in being which possess a war-winning capability—that is, the capability to destroy

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an *enemy's military forces* and his means to wage war. It lends credibility and authority to all actions, ranging upward from a show of force, that are taken to deter *or* defeat major aggression. It enables us to employ our forces selectively in response to conflict at any level. The type of force and the amount of force we apply must be regulated to convince an aggressor that continued provocation would bring consequences that are unacceptable to him.

Alternatives to the counterforce concept have been proposed from time to time in the form of the finite-deterrence and minimum-deterrence approaches to strategy. These alternatives are unacceptable because they are based on the assumption that we can deter a resolute aggressor by reducing our capability to the point where we could only target "hostage" cities. I do not believe this would provide an efficient deterrence or a war-winning capability should war occur.

Today we hear much discussion about "overkill." The people who are talking "overkill" knowingly or unknowingly support the adoption of a minimum-deterrence strategy. In advocating that strategy, they are addressing the *wrong* problem. Instead of belaboring our ability to destroy the population of an aggressor nation, they should consider what we require to save American lives and property by preventing war, or by gaining a decision as quickly as possible, if war occurs. That is the proper and traditional task of US armed forces. The counterforce strategy which we are pursuing and analyzing today provides our best prospect for success in that task.

To carry out a counterforce strategy we have consistently advocated the development and maintenance of a mixed strategic force. The pace of our programs has been impressive. We have been able to bring three versions of the Atlas, two versions of the Titan, and the Minuteman into operation, and at the same time to maintain the known capability of our manned-bomber force. This was accomplished in about one-third of the time period that elapsed between the B-17 and the B-52.

Since 1961 we have also increased our tactical forces' capability to perform their missions of airlift, close air support, interdiction, counterair, and counterinsurgency.

When the Cuban crisis occurred, it was clear that our intensified efforts to broaden and improve our deterrent position had produced a major dividend.

Our mixed strategic force at that time included about 600 B-52s, more than 400 of which were equipped with the Hound Dog missile. We also had about 700 B-47s, 900 tankers, and 170 ICBMs. That force was meshed closely with NORAD's warning system, manned-interceptor units, and missile squadrons. Our tactical forces included 2,500 fighters and 500 transports, augmented by fifteen Reserve troop carrier wings, eleven Air National Guard reconnaissance squadrons, and five communications squadrons.

Our always-alert SAC and NORAD forces during that crisis held a decisive margin of strategic advantage. The national will to employ those forces was clear and unequivocal. This combination of capability and determination imposed a stern restraint against a conflict of higher intensity. Under that protection, strong United States tactical forces were able to provide a decisive margin of local advantage. Acting from our over-all margin of military superiority, we successfully supported our national policy in that major crisis.

Now a few words about the direction of our present and future efforts to continually maintain the deterrence so graphically demonstrated in the Cuban crisis.

Under the unified direction of the US Strike Command, our tactical fighters, assault airlift, and strategic-airlift elements will have an opportunity to take part in an increasing number of joint exercises. These exercises will improve their efficiency in close air support, interdiction, reconnaissance, counterair, and airlift operations.

We are already taking steps to make further improvements in our highly effective capability for close support of the Army's combat units. Our new tactical fighters—the F-4C, the improved version of the F-105, and the F-111A—will have the range, endurance, and load-carrying capacity for optimum effectiveness in that role.

Looking beyond these fighters, we also see a requirement for even more versatile aircraft to include vertical-takeoff-and-landing types.

Our airlift capability in the tactical area has already been greatly improved by the C-130s and C-135s and will be brought to an even higher level of effectiveness by the C-141.

Our Special Air Warfare Units are providing support to Vietnamese forces in their fight against the Communists and to many governments in Latin America.

Aerospace defense continues to be an essential element of deterrence. We recognize that a replacement interceptor will be needed for the F-106, which went out of production more than two years ago. Efforts to determine the best aircraft for this task are continuing.

We believe that civil defense and active defense against ballistic missiles and more advanced space systems can be provided, and we support efforts in these vital areas.

In our strategic forces one of our major concerns is to ensure the continued ability of our manned bombers to penetrate steadily improving defenses. These defenses now comprise a widespread deployment of surface-to-air missiles, manned interceptors, and advanced equipment for air defense warning and control.

In view of the fact that our manned bombers will provide the greatest share of our total delivery capability for several years to come, it is imperative that we continue to concentrate on penetration aids. These include sophisticated tactics for penetration at high, medium, and low altitudes which will enable us to reach the target successfully.

With our missiles, we are emphasizing means to provide for their prelaunch survival as well as developing devices that will ensure the survival of the warhead during reentry.

I emphasize again that the Air Force is making a concerted effort to maintain a mixed force of manned aircraft and missiles and, for the longer term, vehicles that could operate in space. The Secretary of Defense shares our view of this mixed-force concept. He has directed that we continue our studies of follow-on manned, strategic vehicles that can counter threats and survive in the varied plateaus of aerospace operations.

These manned systems will continue to give us a flexible military capability. They will be able to achieve high destructive effectiveness against hard targets. Their existence will require an aggressor to expend vast resources in defense measures. Finally, manned systems will give us vehicles which can be adapted to change and thereby retain their effectiveness regardless of technical advances by the enemy.

In our space program we are taking positive action to assure that if the Soviets pose a threat in space we will be ready.

The Soviets have already made intensive efforts in the low-orbit, near-space area where military applications will most likely first occur. We must, therefore, begin acquiring now the military space capabilities to defend against hostile actions that could be directed against us from space.

With these points in mind, the Air Force has proposed efforts in space over the ensuing years which are aimed at two objectives. First, in our move to augment terrestrial forces, we can expect programs such as space-based communications to improve the reliability and scope of command-and-control systems. Surveillance of atmospheric weather from space can provide information regarding cloud conditions in target and refueling areas.

Space systems may also furnish a means of active defense against ballistic missiles and of warning that a missile attack is under way. These and other space systems we are considering could enable us to posture and employ our forces more effectively.

Our second objective in space is to be able to determine at all times whether there is a threat present and to deal with it if necessary. To accomplish this we have a requirement for an improved detection and tracking system, a means of inspecting unidentified space devices, a means of disabling hostile satellites, and finally, a system for continually monitoring such space phenomena as radiation and solar flares—a capability that would be essential in supporting prolonged space operations.

The basic research components already in development in our space program are the Titan III booster and the X-20A (Dyna-Soar) research reentry vehicle. Provisions have also been made for Air Force participation in the Gemini program, and we are investigating the potential military utility of an orbital test space station.

In advancing these efforts, we are convinced that man's skill and experience will contribute to the reliability and effectiveness of military space systems. Experience in the Mercury flights has supported that view, and the Air Force role in the Gemini program will provide an early source of new information on man's usefulness in space. Certainly the X-20A type of vehicle, by enabling the pilot to select a preferred landing site from the many available over a spread of thousands of miles, may have significant advantages over ballistic reentry.

AFA'S September Convention brought together four of the five living past or present USAF or Air Corps Chiefs of Staff. From left they are retired Gen. Carl A. Spaatz (March '46 to April '48); Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, the present Chief; retired Maj. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois (December '31 to December '35); and retired Gen. Nathan F. Twining (June '53 to June '57). Missing was retired Gen. Thomas D. White, who was the Chief of Staff from July '57 to July '61.

We should remember that it was the technical superiority of our forces that provided the basis for our strategic advantage in the years following World War II. For that reason we strongly advocate the continuation of an intensive technical effort to ensure that we preserve the qualitative edge in weapon systems.

Looking at our efforts, past and present, all across the board, I think it is obvious that our direction toward broadening our deterrent base has been wisely selected. It can be measured by the success we have experienced in preventing a full-scale war. It has also contributed by deterring conflicts of lesser intensity. And it has protected United States interests when this latter type conflict occurred.

I have discussed briefly with you the *direction* of our Air Force effort and almost not at all about the *pace*. The facts on that score speak so clearly that I will limit my observation to three brief points. First, in an absolute sense, our progress has been impressive. Second, relative to the Soviets, it has been good enough to maintain a clear though greatly reduced margin of strategic advantage. And finally, what we accomplish or fail to accomplish over the months and years ahead will swing the balance either way.

As I appear before you at this anniversary luncheon, I take great satisfaction in the knowledge that you will understand fully the challenge which faces us. I also take great satisfaction in the knowledge that we can count on your support in meeting this challenge.—END