

OPENING STATEMENT OF
GEN DAVID GOLDFEIN, VCSAF
SASC CONFIRMATION HEARING TO BE CSAF
16 JUN 16 at 9:30 AM

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished member of the committee. Let me begin by thanking you for your tireless support and advocacy for the greatest treasure in our Nation's arsenal ... the young men and women who continue to join our ranks and serve their country during time of war. If confirmed, it will be my honor to lead the over 660,000 Active, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian Airmen as the 21st Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force. I'd like to thank President Obama, Secretary Carter, Secretary James, and Chairman Dunford for this opportunity of a lifetime.

I'd also like to thank Gen Mark and Betty Welsh. Not only are they concluding 40 years of distinguished service, they've led our Air Force over the past 4 years with passion, style, and unwavering commitment. It is my honor to serve as Gen Welsh's Vice Chief of Staff ... and if confirmed, Dawn and I look forward to building on their success.

I'm thrilled to introduce my family, beginning with our youngest daughter Diana who is a 3rd generation 1st grade school teacher following in the footsteps of her Grandma Mary and her mother who are both here today. In a few months ... Diana will be a published author of her first children's book. She reminds me of the very best teachers I ever had growing up. Kind, caring, compassionate, but tough when she has to be.

If asked, most of us can remember our favorite teachers ... but almost ALL of us can name our 1st grade teacher. Her kids are blessed to be in her class ... and I could not be prouder to be her dad.

Our oldest daughter Danielle is a Captain in the Air Force and is on duty today so could not attend. She's also 3rd generation following in the footsteps of her Grandpa Bill, a retired F-4 pilot who fought in Vietnam and is here today ... both of her uncles, her cousin, and her Dad. Dani is a great officer and a combat veteran, having recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan. She helps keep me grounded and in tune with our younger force and I could not be a prouder father.

All that is good in our daughters comes from their mother Dawn who I met in high school 40 years ago when both of our parents were stationed in Germany. Dawn represents the best deal our Nation gets in a military family ... our spouses. 33 years, 21 moves, 3 wars, and several deployments to include a recent 2-year separation. I not only love her ... I admire her strength and her courage ... and believe I am the luckiest man on the planet that she chose me.

Chairman, I've seen first-hand how important a service chief's relationship is with members of this committee to help you execute your oversight responsibilities. If confirmed, I am committed to building a

relationship of trust and confidence with each of you based on openness, candor, and competence. The questions you just asked form the foundation of this relationship and I fully understand the gravity and importance of living up to my answers.

Today's global landscape offers equal amount challenge and opportunity. A combination of strong states challenging world order, weak states that cannot preserve order, and under-governed spaces providing sanctuary to extremists ... all represent challenges we must counter simultaneously as part of a joint, coalition, and inter-agency team.

From troubling Chinese military activity in the South China Sea ... to recent provocative actions by Russia in Crimea and Ukraine ... to continued malign activity across the Middle East by Iran ... to the increasingly unpredictable actions we see out of North Korea ... each represents state-sponsored activity that challenges world order and the stability and predictability all civilized nations rely on for prosperity and freedom. Add to this the military campaign to deliver a lasting defeat to ISIL and our continued work in Afghanistan and we have the framework Secretary Carter laid out months ago as the five global challenges the Department of Defense must be ready to counter – China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and Violent Extremism. If confirmed, I will take very seriously my role as a member of

the joint chiefs and look forward to providing an Airman's voice as we deliberate military options, capabilities, and risk in formulating our best military advice.

The other hat I will wear if confirmed is the top officer in my service, responsible for assisting Secretary James to properly organize, train, and equip an Air Force that can meet these challenges both today and tomorrow. When I was commissioned in 1983, we had not fought in combat since my Dad came home from Vietnam. The Cold War was in its' final years and there was no conflict on the horizon. This all changed in 1991 when we launched Operation DESERT STORM. When the war ended, the Air Force stayed. From Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH, to follow-on campaigns in the Balkans during Operations DELIBERATE FORCE and then ALLIED FORCE ... through the last 15 years of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, INHERENT RESOLVE, and RESOLUTE SUPPORT, the Air Force has been in continuous combat for 25 years. While we're extremely proud of our contributions to these operations, it has taken its' toll on our ability to properly balance capability, capacity, and readiness. When combined with unpredictable budgets and the devastating impacts of sequestration, I am acutely aware that if confirmed, I will be taking the reins

of the smallest and oldest Air Force in our 69-year history with significant readiness challenges.

But where there is challenge, there is also opportunity ... and I believe it is the obligation and duty of senior leaders to offer the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress creative solutions to our most complex challenges. We are the service known throughout our history for innovation and breaking barriers. From the earliest days of manned flight ... to breaking the sound barrier ... to reaching the outer limits of space ... to fielding advanced stealth technology ... we are the service you rely on to push the limits of innovation. It's in our bloodline. We've faced challenging times before and overcome them with ideas.

Over 90% of today's Air Force joined after 9-11. They have never known a day when we were not at war. As I speak, Airmen stand watch with our nation's most destructive weapons in the nuclear enterprise ... they sit alert and will scramble when called upon to defend our homeland ... they work side-by-side with their fellow SOF warriors in the most remote corners of the globe to build partner capacity and hunt down our enemies ... they're flying global mobility missions to deliver supplies for humanitarian relief efforts or personnel for a complex joint mission ... they're flying combat over Iraq and Syria, providing top cover for the joint and coalition teams as we

deliver a lasting defeat to ISIL ... and they're operating 12 constellations of satellites providing everything from an uninterrupted GPS signal to an unblinking eye on our adversaries. These Airmen, proud members of the Profession of Arms, provide the oxygen the joint team breathes.

This is who we are ... your Air Force. We operate from a capsule below the surface ... to a combat controller or cyber warrior on the surface ... to a cockpit at all altitudes above the surface ... to a constellation in space. We're everywhere. We know who we are ... and we know what we are expected to deliver for the joint team ... Airpower.

If confirmed, it will be my honor to work every day with Secretary James to create the environment where great ideas get a hearing ... where barriers are crushed ... where Airmen and their families thrive ... and where warfighting excellence remains our top focus. Thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.