AA171 Rendezvous Cleaning

[00:00:00] **John "Slick" Baum:** Welcome to the aerospace advantage podcast. I'm your host, John Slickbaum. Here on the aerospace advantage, we speak with leaders in the DOD, industry, and other subject matter experts to explore the intersection of strategy, operational concepts, technology, and policy when it comes to air and space power.

[00:00:16] **John "Slick" Baum:** So if you like learning about aerospace power, you are in the right place. To our regular listeners, welcome back. And if it's your first time here, thank you so much for joining us. As a reminder, if you like what you're hearing today, do us a favor and follow our show. Please give us a like and leave a comment so that we can keep charting the trajectories that matter to you most.

[00:00:36] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** All right. So this

[00:00:37] **John "Slick" Baum:** week it's time for the rendezvous, our monthly installment where the Mitchell team digs into stories you've seen in the headlines. And we're going to spend most of this episode focused on the department of the air forces reorganization, as you know, it's probably one of the biggest changes to impact both the air and space force in recent memory.

[00:00:54] **John "Slick" Baum:** So we will hit it, uh, and talk about some of the different current events per usual. And to kick it off, [00:01:00] I'd like to introduce Mitchell Institute, Dean Lieutenant General David Deptula. Sir, welcome.

[00:01:04] Hey, thanks, Slick. Great to be here. Awesome. And we also have our space expert Charles Galbraith with us as well. So Charles, welcome back. Thanks, Slick. It's always great to be with you. All right. And next we have Todd Sledgehammer with us. And Sledge is one of our DC experts. Great to be back, Slick. All right.

[00:01:23] And we also have Major General Larry Stutzfreem, our Director of Research. So we're good to have you back on the show. And last, but certainly not least, we've got Gonzo Gunzinger, our director of future warfighting concepts and capabilities. Hello everyone. Gonzo. Great to have you back in before we get, kicked off Charles.

[00:01:42] I know we're working on an upcoming event, so you want to give us a rundown quickly?

[00:01:45] **Charles Galbreath:** Thanks Slick.

[00:01:46] **Charles Galbreath:** Ladies and gentlemen, I just wanted to highlight that on March 27th, we'll be hosting our third annual Space Power Security Forum. This is an all day event in person here in DC, covering all things space power. And we're featuring top space force leaders from the chief of space [00:02:00] operations, General Saltzman to other core members of his team, plus industry leaders and more.

[00:02:05] **Charles Galbreath:** There's a reason why we've had top news outlets like CNN, Fox news, C SPAN broadcast segments of this event each year. People make news and you'll want to hear it from them firsthand. Space is limited. So please go to our website and sign up. This event always fills up fast. It's free to attend, just make sure that you RSVP in time.

[00:02:25] **Charles Galbreath:** Thanks, and we're really looking forward to seeing you this year. Again, that date, March 27th. Awesome, Charles. Thanks for that, and I hope some of our folks can make it out. Um, all right, Sledge, I'm going to reissue you the same question we keep asking. Are we ever going to move past this continuing resolution?

[00:02:42] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Well, I wish I could give you an answer that didn't require you to come back and ask that. Um, but, uh, yeah, the short answer is yes. It might take a while. Um, and it really boils down to when legislative text is going to be available and how long it takes for, uh, that text to, uh, to clear the House, uh, [00:03:00] and the Senate.

[00:03:01] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** I, I don't want to geek out too much here, but I'd like to kind of do a little bit of the constitutional things I wish my high school civics teacher had taught me. first of all, the Constitution, Article 1 establishes Congress as the first branch of government. It also says the only thing that Congress has to do every year is pass appropriations bills.

[00:03:18] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Everything else is poetry. So that I think is what really frustrates a lot. And then the second thing I wish he would have taught me, uh, is the winning lottery numbers on Capitol Hill. And those are 218. 60 in one. And the Speaker of the House needs to get 218 votes. The Majority Leader in the Senate needs 60 votes.

[00:03:38] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And then it has to be something that the occupant of the White House is willing to sign. So those are really the three numbers that we, we need to keep focused on as we consider what's happening on Capitol Hill. and now to recap where we are. So the government is funded under a laddered CR. There are four, uh, appropriations bills.

[00:03:56] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** That expire on at midnight, Friday, the 1st of [00:04:00] March. Uh, and then a week later at midnight on the 8th of March, the remaining eight appropriations or continued resolution bills expire. So, there's really precious little time, uh, to be able to pass anything between now and midnight on the 1st to avoid a partial, uh, government shutdown.

[00:04:16] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And, and I want to point out the funding levels, the amount of money is not the problem here. There are some policy writers That are really complicating matters and it's everything from, you know, personnel policy like abortion travel, some the, DEI initiatives and, uh, uh, border security as well as some, uh, gun provisions that are really holding things up.

[00:04:39] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, so I guess then that leads us to what comes next and I'll give you kind of the, uh, the weapons school debrief on best case, worst case, most likely here at best cases, all the planets magically aligned and we're able to get appropriations bills done. Unfortunately, we don't have time to do that. Uh, Speaker Johnson has promised his conference that he will give them 72 hours to review the text of [00:05:00] whatever legislation is available.

[00:05:01] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And, uh, as of recording time, there has been no text available. So that would mean the first vote would be on, approximately, 24 hours before the deadline, uh, funding to expire. So that's not enough time for the Senate to pick up anything, uh, move it through, even if they were to get a unanimous consent agreement.

[00:05:18] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Uh, and then over to, uh, to the White House for signature. Um, the worst case is, uh, that all hope is lost. And, uh, when they decide that, uh, they can't punt it anymore, they're going to go with a full year continuing resolution. The, uh, the problem with the, uh, with the CR is, as you remember last year in June, when the Financial Responsibility or Fiscal Responsibility Act passed, there was an automatic 1 percent cut to government spending.

[00:05:44] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** If we didn't have appropriations bills by the 1st of May, um, under a full year, CR, those automatic cuts would go into effect and, uh, that would drop the, uh, FY 24, uh, top line from 886 billion, uh, down to about. [00:06:00] Uh, 879 billion, so you'd see about a, uh, almost 9 billion cut in, uh, uh, in purchasing power for the, uh, Department of Defense.

[00:06:10] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, and there are some in Congress that are actually banking on this happening, that they would really like to see that, and that's the, that's the fundamental problem that Speaker Johnson faces right now. Uh, the most likely scenario, though, is that they come to some type of an agreement here in the, in the next few hours, uh, the text is passed.

[00:06:27] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And, um, there is insufficient time to get a, uh, to get the bills passed before the first four bills under the CR expire. So we end up with a short term, uh, partial government shutdown over the weekend that would have negligible impact, but that's the most likely. Uh, but there are some other wild cards out there, uh, probably the most notable is that there are discussions that there'll be another short term CR to kick the can down to the 22nd of March, which allows time to get the rest, all 12 of the appropriations bills done, uh, and, and get the government [00:07:00] back open and running.

[00:07:01] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** But again, just to remind people, it's, it's how does Speaker Johnson get to 218. Uh, without forcing a motion to vacate, uh, to really throw, throw things into, uh, uh, uh, chaos. And it is a fast moving trans. So stay tuned. ISKRA Well, Sledge, as

[00:07:18] **John "Slick" Baum:** always, thanks for, for your breakdown. You know, I've got to ask you also, we were hearing defense leaders talk about the negative impacts that their services are feeling.

[00:07:25] **John "Slick" Baum:** Uh, so which ones have, struck you the most when it comes to, uh, the things that affect the air and the

[00:07:31] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** space force? Yeah, I think slick that's really it's impossible to pick a program or two. To me, it's really all about readiness. that's what it takes to deliver a capability. Secretary Kendall, I think, has, uh, has established a masterful framework under his operational imperatives to decide how the service is going to prioritize investment.

[00:07:52] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** and I think the, continuing resolution, either, you know, partial year or, you know, God forbid, a full year continuing resolution is going [00:08:00] to affect each of those, uh, operational imperatives differently. But if you were going to force me to say something, would say it has the most adverse impact on procurement.

[00:08:10] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, you have to buy stuff, um, and not just airplanes and satellites, although those do help, uh, but you have to buy stuff in order to field, uh, capabilities. And under a CR, what really happens is the, um, new starts and programs are prohibited, and, uh, there are no production increases or ramp rates in anything that you're currently manufacturing.

[00:08:30] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** So, it really makes it hard to dig out of that smaller, older, less ready hole. Um, compounding that, you know, there, there is limited budget authority that the Air Force has. There are must pay bills. Personnel accounts are going to be pretty much sacred. Uh, you don't want to eat your seed corn. So, uh, research, defense test and evaluation is going to be funded and because of what's going on around the world, weapons and weapons sustainment accounts are going to be robustly funded.

[00:08:58] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** So again, it comes back [00:09:00] to O and M and procurement. Which are your fundamental drivers of, uh, of readiness. Um, I also, I, you know, I just want to add, there's some hidden costs, I think, to doing continuing resolution and that is, it's very inefficient in the way you plan and you program and that you execute contracts.

[00:09:17] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** So, the uncertainty and the delays impact the programs themselves, but more importantly, the people that have to execute those programs, uh, specific to the Space Force, you know, I'll defer to Charles on on particular programs, but, you know, what, what strikes 4 years old. Um, it's hard enough to build an organization from the ground up, and that's really what we're trying to do, is we focus on spaces of war fighting domain.

[00:09:40] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, it's practically impossible to do that when you've got one or more hands tied behind your back.

[00:09:45] **John "Slick" Baum:** Yeah. You know, and we also saw this news story, uh, in Politico talking about how the budget caps Congress enacted are gonna drive some major pain for all the services. Uh, you know, reduction in the F 35 buy, going down to one attack submarine and a cut for army helicopters.

[00:09:59] **John "Slick" Baum:** there was a [00:10:00] lot. Um, you know, it's one thing for a member to, like the macro notion of budget cuts, but another one, they see the tangible impact, especially, you know, when they hit close to home and to be clear, Given the scale of modernization these days, especially for the Air Force and the Space Force, you know, none of this stuff is optional. So mission sunset without new, uh, capability, uh, and having enough capacity. So how do you think Congress will respond, uh, to these cuts?

[00:10:24] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Well, I've, I think first, Slick, it's important to address a couple of things here.

[00:10:28] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** First of all, the, the information that you're talking about is all pre decisional. Uh, nothing's final until the FY25 budget request comes out and that's what you're talking about is really leaks or trial balloons for major programs that are in the FY25 budget request. Um, and then that's exactly what that is.

[00:10:44] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** It's a request. The administration requests and Congress provides. So a lot of it is pre decisional. We'll see how that plays out. Um, that said, I do expect to see those in the FY 25, uh, uh, budget requests, but I think bigger picture, [00:11:00] um, there's, there's a fundamental mismatch between our national security strategy and what we are, or what we're appropriating for national security.

[00:11:08] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** The top line is far too small for what the Country asked the Department of Defense and particularly the Department of the Air Force to do so, um, that that's, that's really what has to be addressed. And if you remember from, uh, previous podcasts, the, the FY 25 budget request is gonna be about $895 billion.

[00:11:29] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** That's a 1% increase above what we expect in the FY 24 if they ever get that, uh, uh, passed. Um, 1% does not keep up with inflation. So that's a reduced purchasing power effect right there. Um, you know, as my grandfather used to say, um, we, we have a champagne appetite, but only a beer income. So there are too many requirements and not enough money to get things done.

[00:11:53] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, but I would say also, Slick, that it's about how the DOD budget is divided. There's a mismatch between the service, um, [00:12:00] contributions to the National Defense Strategy and what the budget allocations are. The Air and Space Force are asked to do an incredible amount and they're not given the resources to do it.

[00:12:10] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** The continuing, um, effort of easy planning by going one third, one third, one third to the three departments is not going to cut it. And it certainly doesn't cut it for the Department of the Air Force. Um, but now specifically your, your question, and sadly, I predict that the past will be prologue, uh, and Congress is going to just do what they did the, uh, the last few years.

[00:12:30] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** The big ticket items that are in the, in the budget are going to be funded, so I would imagine that there's going to be a submarine added back. There's going to be additional F 35s added back. There's going to be a lot of those big ticket items that protect jobs for members of Congress. Those will go back.

[00:12:46] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, I think personnel accounts, are going to be sacred cows. And, weapons procurement is going to be pretty important there. So I think what's left over is going to face some severe, um, it's going to be really a tough fiscal environment for a [00:13:00] lot of the, uh, the readiness type of programs there.

[00:13:02] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** The less glamorous enabling slash connecting. Capabilities, I think, are going to be at great risk. So anything that's JADC2 related, uh, is going to, is going to struggle to get full funding there. Um, and then more importantly, I think the, the, um, uncertainty over how FY24 is going to play out certainly affects the numbers in FY25, but more importantly, the timing of when that budget request is going to go over to the Hill.

[00:13:26] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And just to remind people, the State of the Union Address is scheduled for. Uh, the 7th of March, so that's, that's basically, you know, a week from Thursday, um, more than likely there will be a partial government shutdown. We may not have the, uh, this, we may be facing another shutdown without having the, the last eight, uh, appropriations bills funded it by the 8th March deadline, um, so that, that's going to really make it complicated.

[00:13:53] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Uh, OMB has stated that, uh, they are going to send the FY 25 budget request over to Congress. as early as the [00:14:00] 11th of March, I don't know how that's possible if you don't know what 24 is. so we'll see, but, you know, really the bottom line here is that every day that we don't have an F. Y. 24 budget affects readiness.

[00:14:12] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And it also impacts FY 25, which will further impact readiness. And I'm going to go out on a limb here. You heard it here first. I'm going to predict that FY 25 starts under a continuing resolution. All

[00:14:25] **John "Slick" Baum:** right. Well, there you have it from, from Sledgehammer and I'm sure some other folks want to hop in here.

[00:14:29] **John "Slick" Baum:** So I want to open the floor for, uh, for our team here. Yeah.

[00:14:32] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Well, um, Slick, I have to weigh in, uh, on this as it's the crux of our defense challenges today. Um, as Sledge said, uh, particularly for both the Air Force and the Space Force, um, simply put, and to reiterate his remarks, uh, both these services have much more mission assigned and expected of them than they do the resources to [00:15:00] accomplish those missions.

[00:15:02] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** The world's on fire and the Congress is acting like nothing is happening. Budgets are driving our military strategy, not the other way around. And the potential consequences are going to be disastrous when we lose in the next major regional fight, because of a lack of capacity. When we run out of munitions in the first week of the conflict, when we don't have enough qualified pilots to take the fight to the enemy because of significant attrition of our geriatric combat air forces and the associated 2000 pilots shortfall.

[00:15:38] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** That's been an issue for over a decade when we don't have sufficient maintainers to generate necessary combat sorties. And the list goes on. So we either need to resource our defense strategy or lessen the demands of that strategy. By the way, neither of which is likely to occur, [00:16:00] or we need to get smarter about how we best allocate the resources that we do have to achieve the greatest combat effect per cost.

[00:16:11] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Okay. And that will require an honest rules and missions review. It's been long overdue. Now, I hope that our new chairman is putting together a plan to do that. Because frankly, that's the only way we might be able to squeeze out some needed capabilities and capacity to help us in our next big fight.

[00:16:36] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Candidly, a fight with China will be determined by how strong our air and space forces are, not how big our army is. So it's time to start shifting resources from the Army to the Air Force. Yeah, Gonzi

[00:16:52] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** here. I'd like to make one quick point, picking up on Slick. You mentioned the Army's cancellation of its program to buy a new scout [00:17:00] helicopter to replace its retired Kiowa Warriors.

[00:17:04] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** That's going to save five billion dollars or more, but the real reason for the cancellation is the Army wants to use some of those savings to field low cost UAVs that can perform the same attack reconnaissance mission without risking crew losses. The Army Chief of Staff has said the potential for low cost drones that are equipped with sensors and weapons to replace crewed scouts is a lesson learned from the Ukrainian conflict.

[00:17:30] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** And let's not forget that crewed helos are not survivable in high risk air defense environments. We saw that during Operation Desert Storm.

[00:17:39] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** So that's a good move

[00:17:40] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** on the part of the Army. And its rationale for doing so is exactly the kind of logic that Congress should agree with, but to be frank,

[00:17:48] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** DOD should make more of those

[00:17:50] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** kinds of trade offs based on how we plan to fight in the future, as General Deptula just said, not in the past, in long range strike, something we've discussed [00:18:00] before, and the high, very high cost of service launched weapons compared to cost effective air delivered weapons is exactly the kind of trade offs

[00:18:13] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** You know, I'll go back to what you said, General Deptula, the it's amazing, you know, you just laid out a narrative about how high the risk is right now to the nation. And, uh, I just don't see that kind of candor coming out of the Department of the Air Force. Uh, I do think that there is a need to communicate more effectively, more assertively about the true state that the, uh, Department of the Air Force is in right now.

[00:18:42] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** And that's going to require some folks to, uh, change their M. O. a little bit. Not. Kind of color outside the boundaries of the budget, but I'd also come back to say, you know, I hope sledge. There's some hope soon in the future that as 40 billion dollar pass through, which [00:19:00] just the other day, uh, defense media at an interview, uh, the, uh, reporter threw at me that, uh, the 3 services departments are, uh.

[00:19:09] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** Equally funded and I had to go into a little tutorial about the pass through. It just misrepresents that there is some kind of equal share of budget going to each of the services. And we know the Air Force right now is really hurting and is not funded equally with the rest of the services.

[00:19:29] **Charles Galbreath:** So, uh, Charles here, slick.

[00:19:31] **Charles Galbreath:** From a space perspective, you're getting an incredible deal with every dollar you put in space. You're getting far more capability, impacting all of the services as well as all of our national security, uh, activities and several commercial activities and everyday way of life for the average American.

[00:19:50] **Charles Galbreath:** Where we need to see some change, though, is recognizing that the space capabilities that we've relied on for decades are under. Attack, they're under [00:20:00] threat and we have to adjust our thinking and our budgets and our way of procuring systems and our way of delivering capabilities and effects to respond to that threat and you can't do that if you taper off the budgets after only four years of growth for the space force, that growth has got to continue until we get to a mature state.

[00:20:23] **Charles Galbreath:** The 30 billion a year, and that's a small pittance, uh, compared to the other services, uh, you know, is not enough to grow the Space Force to what we need it to be. The 14, 000 or so guardians, and that's military and civilian guardians, is not enough for the missions that we inherited. The missions that we've grown to and the missions we know we're going to continue to grow to in the coming years.

[00:20:48] **John "Slick" Baum:** Very well said all. I'm glad that, uh, that you all hopped in. Um, so I do want to ask you one more question, uh, about the Hill, uh, any shot we get the Ukraine funding. Uh, you know, it's beyond frustrating that a lot of members don't [00:21:00] understand the broader implications of their opposition, you know, China's watching this, so is Iran, North Korea, and obviously Putin, um.

[00:21:07] **John "Slick" Baum:** You know, the message we're sending, you know, is to push up the aggression. You know, the West won't hold. So, uh, you know, we're going to start putting Americans in harm's way because of this. I mean, frankly, you could argue that we already are. Look at what's going on in the Middle East. So what are your predictions there?

[00:21:21] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Yes, look, I, well, first of all, I agree with your underlying message here. And that is weakness emboldens our adversaries and invites aggression. Historically, appeasement has a very, very poor track record. So, think that's really what you're trying to say here. Specifically on Ukraine, yes, there is a shot.

[00:21:39] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, and I see really two different, uh, paths for this to take. Um, and again, this gets back to the math problem that Speaker Johnson has. How does he get to 218? Uh, when he has a significant part or portion of his, his conference that are getting beat up back in their district saying, why are we sending more money to Ukraine?

[00:21:56] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Secure the southern border first? So it's going to be very, very [00:22:00] difficult. In fact, one senior defense appropriator said if it's a Republican only event, it's going to take about four months. To get a supplemental for Ukraine past four months, the war could be over. I mean, that's really unacceptable. Um, and I, I think a lot of the, uh, the name calling that's going on back and forth between the, uh, uh, the white house and Congress is not very helpful either.

[00:22:22] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, but you know, we've, we've said it on this podcast many times over the last 18 to 24 months. Um, I think there's been a fundamental lack of leadership out of the white house as to what the end state and what our objectives are in Ukraine. You know, supporting the effort for, you know, whatever it takes, as long as it takes is not a strategy and the president needs to get out there and he needs to articulate what victory looks like and rally support for Ukraine aid.

[00:22:49] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** He can't just call. You just can't throw bombs around and call names. And I think case in point representative Mike Garcia from California. Um, has a white paper out. It's [00:23:00] on his website. If anyone wants to track it down, it's www. mikegarcia. house. gov. And the white paper is titled addressing the Ukraine funding debate and urgent need for a path to victory, transparency, accountability, and a sustainable piece.

[00:23:17] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** He's basically begging the president. He says, you've got supporters in Congress that want to help us or help you. So help us help you. And, and I think that's the dialogue that needs to be going on. And, and I think happily, um, you know, uh, Tuesday, so there'll be a few days before this podcast is, uh, is published.

[00:23:37] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, the president has invited the big four. So he's got, uh, Senator Schumer and McConnell, and he's got, uh, Speaker Johnson. And minority leader Jeffrey's at the White House to talk about FY 24 and some of the security supplementals Ukraine at the top of the list. So let's hope they can hammer out some of those issues and get things moving.

[00:23:57] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Uh, but again, you know, it's, it's really a math [00:24:00] problem for the speaker. How does he get to 218? It's going to take a while if you rely solely on the, um, on the Republicans, but there is a very arcane parliamentary, uh, procedure that may save the day for him. And that's called a discharge petition. Um, Democrats filed a house resolution, uh, 1016, uh, about three, I believe about three weeks ago.

[00:24:23] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And it takes. 30 days to what the, the term of art is called ripen. And if that discharge petition gets 218 signatures, then within a certain time period, and I, if I'm not mistaken, it's 48 hours, uh, the speaker has, uh, 48 hours to bring that bill to the floor. If that happens, you will have, um, you'll have a significant number of Republicans, but you'll have almost every single Democrat vote to pass Ukraine funding.

[00:24:52] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Now, the trick is going to be what's in there in terms of policy riders and poison pills, et cetera. But I think that's probably going to be the quickest path for us to [00:25:00] get a package that approves funding for Ukraine, Israel, a few other things that can get to the Senate and pass there and get signed by the president.

[00:25:09] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, and I'll just wrap up this question here, slick with, you know, this reminds me of one of my favorite. quotes from Winston Churchill, always count on the Americans to do the right thing after they've tried everything else. Um, so I, I think that's where we are, but in the meantime, Europe's got to step up or this war could be over before we, uh, we get to the front.

[00:25:28] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Yeah, let me jump in there with another quote. Edmund Burke said, quote, The only thing needed for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing, unquote. Not providing aid to Ukraine now is a vote for Putin to whim. And the triumph of evil over good, that would be a shameful outcome and undermines every tenant for the reason that the United States was established in the first place.

[00:25:57] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Sir, of course, could not agree more. And, [00:26:00] uh, general Deptula, you've been in the news a lot talking about, uh, things like the, the Houthi strikes. So, uh, the U S and some of our allies have responded, but is it enough? And, you know, it seems like things are getting worse, not better. Yeah. Well, thanks for asking the, the strikes today, frankly, from my perspective, are too gradual and they reflect a whack a mole strategy.

[00:26:24] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** I would also add that this approach is eroding U. S. and allied deterrent credibility. we've seen this before in our history, and one would think that we'd learn from it. Look at the Rolling Thunder campaign in Vietnam, a gradualist strategy that resulted in nothing but enormous U. S. combat losses without any significant effect on our enemy.

[00:26:48] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** It should come as no surprise that Iranian proxy groups are continuing attacks despite the recent U. S. retaliatory strikes. And it won't be until Iran and its [00:27:00] proxies understand that their critical interests are at stake, attacks on U. S. forces and international shipping in the region won't stop. Now to do that, there needs to be a course correction in the current U.

[00:27:13] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** S. strategy. The way to deter a wider conflict is not by saying that you don't want a wider war. Or that we won't strike inside Iran, but by making sure Iran understands that if they, and their proxies continue attacks on us personnel and international shipping, then they can expect disastrous consequences.

[00:27:35] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** And then the United States needs to be ready along with our allies to follow up. To create those consequences. So, um, look, I think your next question is probably going to be all right. So how do we do that? So here are a couple of potential options. Um, we could deploy stealth combat aircraft to Iran's doorstep, show them that the United States is serious about reserving the right [00:28:00] to take direct action against Iran.

[00:28:03] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Sending both a squadron of F 35s and a squadron of F 22s would send a very significant message to Iran when they're parked across the Arabian Gulf. These aircraft can operate with impunity anywhere within Iranian airspace, and Iran knows that. Another option is to do to Iranian ships what the Iranian proxies are trying to do to U.

[00:28:27] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** S. and coalition ships. Rid them out of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. This isn't rocket science. Uh, third option, kinetically threaten Iranian oil exports. The Houthis aren't the only ones who can close a strait. The U. S. Navy could interdict Iranian military vessels and oil tankers if we wanted to.

[00:28:53] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Additionally, there are Iranian oil facilities offshore mainline Iran that could also be put at risk. [00:29:00] But we're in an election year. The current administration may not want to risk higher gas prices at the pump by constraining Iran's oil experts. Then there's the potential of cyberattacks. Remember Stuxnet?

[00:29:16] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** That's not Stutznet, that's Stuxnet. Oh, you woke me up there. Cyber operations can be very effective and may be used to shut down Iran's oil distribution infrastructure if sanctions fall short, which they nominally do, as we've seen with Russian, Resources, from oil sales, explode, not decline. bottom line up to this issue is the United States has options to change the current situation and they need to take action to do so. Otherwise they're most likely will be continued disruption of the Red Sea shipping lanes proxies.

[00:29:55] **John "Slick" Baum:** Well, sir, thanks for that.

[00:29:56] **John "Slick" Baum:** And, you know, Gonzo, you worked on the National Security Council and [00:30:00] OSD and a lot more. What are your thoughts

[00:30:01] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** here?

[00:30:02] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** Yeah. So. When I was an OSD and at the NSC during the height of our counter terror and, uh, coin operations in the 2000s, there was a lot of effort dedicated to improving DoD's ability to conduct indirect warfare.

[00:30:17] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** And by that I mean acting through others to defeat enemies that we have in common, instead of conducting operations ourselves. So, the indirect approach typically requires encrypting proxies for these operations, and that's exactly What Iran is doing with the Houthis, the Lebanese Hez, groups of Iranian sympathizers in Iraq, and others.

[00:30:39] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** So, the question is, how do you deter indirect warfare? And the most effective way is to punish the state sponsor of these indirect acts of violence, instead of playing whack a mole in Desert Drizzle to Pull on a term General Attula used, uh, back in the start of the campaign against ISIS, uh, which is what we've been doing.

[00:30:59] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** We [00:31:00] must take actions that will cause Iran's molas to understand the price they will have to pay. Should they continue their proxy campaigns will be unacceptable, and maybe that's their Navy. They lose their Navy. That would be a clear, direct signal that, no longer, we cannot countenance these acts anymore.

[00:31:21] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** And there's a price to pay. It's unacceptable.

[00:31:25] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** Yeah, I'll just, uh, boy, the boss has really laid Ghanza. You made some good points here. I just go back little bit in history here. Remember not too long ago, former president. Labeled, uh, Isis, remember them, they were a junior varsity threat. And then over the next couple of years, they.

[00:31:43] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** They recruited, they grew, they pillaged, they burned, and then finally a decision was made and to eradicate them. And it was a strong one. It was kinetic and, um, there was a minimum amount of, uh, collateral damage, but it had to be done. You're looking at [00:32:00] something very different with the Houthi where you've got this state sponsor, Gonzo, you were saying, um, There are, there's so much more that can be done besides tit for tat, uh, exchanges of, a few bombs here as they, uh, shut down almost half, half of the, uh, transit through the Suez Canal.

[00:32:20] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** That's going to go and affect, prices and costs in Europe and in North America. And we know who's doing this, who's backing it, unlike ISIS. There is a chip to play in this, uh, in this game, and it's got to be strong. Now, we got to remember also that in the world today, you know, the threats we used to think about individually, China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and all of the proxies, they're starting to synergize.

[00:32:46] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** They're working together. We can't just let this go, another, what, six months, 12 months. Huthi will remain until something's done about. the, uh, the very entity that holds [00:33:00] accountability for killing a lot of Americans, over the last 20, 25 years. That's

[00:33:05] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Ron.

[00:33:05] **John "Slick" Baum:** Yeah. Thanks for hopping on that and couldn't agree more.

[00:33:09] **John "Slick" Baum:** I do want to move on, because we mentioned the beginning of the show, uh, that we're going to talk about, this new organization and, you know, secretary Kendall and his department of the air force leadership team unveiled a new organizational plan that will impact both the air force.

[00:33:22] **John "Slick" Baum:** and the space force. And he told us he was going to do this back at the air space and cyber conference in September, and he was good to his word. So, uh, general Deptula, do you mind to walk us through the major movements, uh, on the air force side of the ledger? And, you know, you wrote about this in Forbes

[00:33:36] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** recently too.

[00:33:38] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Yeah, sure. Slick, secretary Kendall and his service chief's visions and rationale for those visions really do deserve a claim, uh, as do the pragmatic plans for implementing. Um, they're recommended changes because rarely in any large organization, much less one of the nation's military [00:34:00] departments are reforms instituted to the magnitude and as important as the ones that they recently revealed, heck, if I did a bit of research and, you know, they accomplished, or at least laid out these changes in a fraction of the time, that it took just to change the Air Force logo.

[00:34:19] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** I Um, now while the air force remains the most capable in the world today, and that's important, we have wonderful people. At the same time, it's the oldest, smallest, and least ready in its own history. That erosion occurred since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it was accelerated during the 20 years of post 9 11 focus on counterinsurgency warfare to the exclusion of preparing for great power conflict.

[00:34:48] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** I, I have to remind the audience of Secretary. Uh, Gates castigating the chief of staff of the United States Air Force and the secretary of the Air Force for quote, next war [00:35:00] itis. Um, yeah, Mr. Gates, that was China. Uh, and as a result, the department of the air force was funded less than the army and the Navy during those years, leading to a set of air forces and space capabilities that desperately require modernization now to get the department of the air force back on a vector to achieve the kind of modernization efforts, not just to replace prior systems, but to deliver relevant capabilities for warfare in the future.

[00:35:30] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Secretary Kimball and his staff. Uh, established the seven operational imperatives and three cross cutting operational enablers. However, the secretary has now made the point that it's not only modernization of the Air Force's aging inventory or of aircraft and Space Force capabilities that are required to deter and if necessary win in a great power conflict.

[00:35:56] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** It became clear to him that fundamental adjustments must [00:36:00] also be accomplished. To both the air force and space force ways and means planning, preparing, organizing, and getting ready to fight against our most challenging potential adversaries. So, okay, let me cut to the chase here. The changes addressed by the secretary and the chiefs of the air force and the space force consist of 24 specific actions that fall into four categories.

[00:36:24] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Develop people, generate readiness, project power, and develop capabilities. And all of these changes are intended to rapidly re vector the fundamental operating posture of the department from how it was organized in the past to optimizing it for the threat challenges of today and the future. By no means are these challenges, are these changes going to happen overnight.

[00:36:52] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** And they will be adjusted. As they're implemented, but as Secretary Kendall made it clear, [00:37:00] change is hard, but losing is unacceptable, and that's his motivation. I just want to add one more thing that I think most people recognize that all of these changes that are. been proposed, are all gonna be for not if the Air Force is not provided the resources necessary to accomplish them.

[00:37:20] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** the secretary just before the announcement of these changes, um, has made his feelings well known regarding congressional budget dysfunction. Uh, that Sledge mentioned earlier by saying that quote, there's a chance that Congress will never appropriate the 24 budget. And I will have been in office for three and a half years and never seen a dime of money.

[00:37:45] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** I need to be competitive with China. That's a crime unquote. I guess what I would tell you, he's exactly right. The consequences of Congress failing to enact all 12 appropriation bills. By April 30th, [00:38:00] according to the Fiscal Responsibility Act, would cut the Department of the Air Force's top line funding to fiscal year 23 enacted levels minus 1%.

[00:38:11] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Okay. What does that mean? Well, what it means is that would not only stifle modernization, it would kill the plan to optimize for great power competition and inalterably yield a significant advantage to our adversaries by reducing the Department of the Air Force buying power by 13 billion. When I would tell you, in fact, it needs that magnitude of plus up annually for the next decade to meet the demands of our current national defense strategy.

[00:38:43] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** So let me wrap this up by saying that the department of the air force has delivered viable and executable plans to modernize. And now to optimize for great power competition, Congress has to now do its job and resource those plans, or it's got a [00:39:00] choice. It can risk losing when great power competition turns into conflict.

[00:39:06] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** Yeah, sir.

[00:39:06] **John "Slick" Baum:** Thanks for breaking that down. And Charles, I got to ask you, how does affect the space force?

[00:39:11] **Charles Galbreath:** Yeah, slick. So. The Space Force as part of the Department of the Air Force is following the same guidance, uh, and direction. And so what General Deptula laid out in terms of the people, capability, readiness, and power projection, the Space Force is looking at those same four key areas.

[00:39:27] **Charles Galbreath:** But I want to take it even more fundamental. The whole purpose of a service is to organize, train, and equip. Uh, we've seen in the past few years, the Space Force really transformed its acquisition approach, and they are delivering Equipment and capability very rapidly. That's great. Well, we've talked about initiatives like, uh, OTTI to help train our guardians to prepare for space as a war fighting domain.

[00:39:52] **Charles Galbreath:** Um, when we stood up the space force, we did our best to organize ourselves to be as lean and effective as possible. [00:40:00] But now with, with this enhanced shift to great power competition, we're taking another look at organization and one of the biggest announcements. That came out of the, uh, warfare symposium was the establishment of a new command within space force and that of a space futures command right now, the space warfighting and analysis center, which conducts the long range planning the wargaming to determine what type of capabilities and technologies we need for the future, um, is almost a direct report within the space force.

[00:40:30] **Charles Galbreath:** But now with the stand up with space futures command, they will be an integral element of that new command that will also help focus science technology research areas within the service. Uh, to ensure that we're getting the most that we can out of our lab efforts to mature technologies that we need for the warfighting capabilities that, you know, a great power competition will demand.

[00:40:54] **Charles Galbreath:** And so there were a lot of great announcements made during the, uh, warfighting [00:41:00] symposium. And I hope people go back and look at those. Those are all available online. But to me, what really stands out is the establishment of a new space forces or space futures command. But yeah, please go take a look at, uh, what, uh, General Burt said about the GMTI mission, go take a look at what we talked about in terms of COCOM integration of space capabilities and, uh, and, and how we're infusing space war fighting mindsets, uh, across the COCOMs in the

[00:41:28] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** service.

[00:41:29] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Well,

[00:41:29] **John "Slick" Baum:** Charles, the space force just stood up a few years ago with a brand new org chart. So why the change

[00:41:34] **Charles Galbreath:** now? Yeah, that's a great question, Slick. And for me, we knew when we stood up the space force that we were. Uh, organizing ourselves primarily for great power competition, and we were trying to be, as I said, as, as effective and as lean as possible that, that where does the space warfighting analysis center go?

[00:41:55] **Charles Galbreath:** Uh, that remained an open question. And what I see by. Having the [00:42:00] announcements come out as part of the department of the air forces, broader strategy, it further reemphasizes to everybody that the space force is there for great power competition, and we are designing our capabilities and our mindsets so that we are prepared for a potential future conflict.

[00:42:15] **Charles Galbreath:** Um, things are changing rapidly within the space force. Uh, something new is happening every day. And so this new organizational approach, I think is just a continuing evolution, uh, of the growth of the space force. And. know, to piggyback onto what general Tepsula was saying about the budget, the continued growth of the Space Force.

[00:42:35] **Charles Galbreath:** Let me emphasize that as many times as possible. That has to be the case. Growth. And we need the budget and we need the personnel to

[00:42:41] **John "Slick" Baum:** make that happen. ISKRA Yeah. It was staggering when you said, you know, the entire force of active duty, civilian guardians is only four. 14, 000 people. So, um, yeah, I could not agree with you more.

[00:42:52] **John "Slick" Baum:** Gonzo and Stutz, you both spent decades in the service and you've seen a lot of reorgs. So, uh, what should we look for as we evaluate whether [00:43:00] this is having the intended effect or not?

[00:43:03] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Yeah, that's a great

[00:43:03] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** question. For me, the most important measure of effectiveness will be the extent the reorg streamlines, the air forces requirements and acquisition processes.

[00:43:14] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** If it's going to help accelerate the delivery. Of new capabilities to warfighters now, while it's still early in the process, I'm happy to see that determining requirements remain the responsibility of the Air Force's warfighters and integrating those requirements will happen at the ICC instead of at the air staff and secretariat levels.

[00:43:35] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** One other point. Anyone who has spent time in the Pentagon understands the outsized role the building's programmers play in the requirements process. So I hope this reward will

[00:43:47] **Lt Gen David A. Deptula, USAF (Ret.):** diminish some

[00:43:49] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** of that budget influence, at least inside the Air Force Air Force warfighters should define future capability and for structure requirements, not the services budget engineer.[00:44:00]

[00:44:00] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** One more thought. I've experienced multiple reorgs during my time in the Pentagon, including Secretary Rumsfeld's mandate in the early 2000s for the services, OSD, and other staffs to cut their personnel by 15 percent to improve duties, tooth to tear ratio. So, staffs made their cuts, but their workloads didn't really diminish.

[00:44:22] **Mark "Gonzo" Gunzinger:** And they compensated by hiring thousands of contractors to fill the gap. That didn't save resources. So the lesson learned is analysis should inform RE ORGs, preferably before changes are decided. And I hope the Air Force has performed that analysis to determine if its RE ORG will be resource neutral, or could drive bills to take dollars away from an already inadequate acquisition

[00:44:48] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** budget.

[00:44:50] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** Hey, slick, well, I'll jump in and slick, you know, me, uh, I'm going to be the odd man out here. Um, I, I have to start by saying I respect the Air Force [00:45:00] secretary for what he's done, especially with the operational initiatives. And we know that he's bypassed a lot of. Corporate process that we know and love, uh, to get, uh, progress on what he's trying to do.

[00:45:12] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** But, but frankly, is this the time for a reorg? I don't know. Uh, and I'm not a big fan of it right now till we see some results, but I do know the reorg is not going to, as General Deptula said, it doesn't alone increase the TOA. It doesn't rebalance budget share across the services. Reorg is not going to improve recruiting or retention.

[00:45:35] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** It's not going to solve it. Pilot shortage problem about 2000 pilots doesn't solve the shortage of fighter pilot experience. It doesn't improve acquisition laws and regulations. It doesn't improve officer development. It sure doesn't encourage Air Force leadership. Uh, in the form of its, uh, senior executives and its general officers to speak more forthrightly about the needs of the service.

[00:45:59] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** So [00:46:00] what I would like to see and, and, uh, withhold judgment is that there are measures in place that can be reported, you know, perhaps every 90 days, not progress toward the reorg, but progress toward whatever the reorg is intended to do in those four buckets, uh, measure that. And, and prove that, uh, this reorg isn't going to introduce more chaos and confusion into a time when, you know, things are, as General Abdullah said, the world's on fire.

[00:46:31] **Maj Gen Larry "Stutz" Stutzriem, USAF (Ret.):** Lots of things to be working and maybe this isn't it. We'll see. ISKRA

[00:46:37] **Charles Galbreath:** Now, thanks for that

[00:46:38] **John "Slick" Baum:** perspective, Stutz. Always, always good to see both sides of the coin. Sledge, I've got to ask you while we have you, how is the Hill responding to this? And you know, what will drive their interest in oversight?

[00:46:46] **John "Slick" Baum:** SLEDGE

[00:46:47] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Yeah. Well, first of all, uh, Slick, I was, I was at the, uh, Air and Space Force Association Warfare Symposium. So got to hear the secretary unveil this. Uh, there were several, uh, Defense Oversight Committee [00:47:00] professional staff members there. And I did get a chance to, to talk with them during the show.

[00:47:04] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** But first of all, I'd like to commend or compliment the, uh, the association for running a great, uh, great conference. I mean, I think over 18, 000 people were there. It was, it was first rate. So, a tip of the cap to the association. Um, but I think measured skepticism is probably the best way summarize the conversations that I had with the professional staff.

[00:47:24] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And, and I think there's a couple things. A lot of what Stutz, uh, just said rings true with, with people that have seen this and been there and, and understand how, what reorgs are supposed to do and theory and what they do in reality. Um, but also the Air Force has had a very, uh, spotty track record with Congress over, well, at least the last 15 years that I've been.

[00:47:46] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, you know, involved on Capitol Hill where we say one thing and then the next year we change plans and we're just very inconsistent in what we're trying to do and what we try to, message. So think there's a little bit of skepticism there. there were a lot of comments. [00:48:00] Um. And again, to paraphrase something about deck chairs in the Titanic, uh, was really the way they saw this in the top line.

[00:48:08] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, but I would expect as this proposal comes over to the Hill and as things move forward, Congress is really going to drill down on a couple of main things. The first is going to be what will it cost? Um, because this is not a, uh, I don't see this as a zero sum game. There's going to be some cost to the reorganization.

[00:48:24] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And then more importantly, who is going to control the budget authorities? You stand up all these different organizations because the legacy bureaucracy is still going to protect the rice bowl. And, and I really hope as the secretary was going and his staff were going through the planning process here, they took a really hard look at Army's future command.

[00:48:45] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And ASALT, the Army Acquisition Logistics and Technology Office. So I guess the equivalent would be, uh, our SQ. Um, because it's great to have these [00:49:00] organizations, but if they don't have the resources, they can't make the resource decisions, they're just high speed cheerleaders. And, and I think that's something that Congress will look at as well.

[00:49:09] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, I think probably the number one thing that they're going to look at also is will this improve readiness? Because that's the biggest concern on Capitol Hill. Um, and I think the one thing they'll drill down the most on are the force presentation models. How the Air Force is going to. Equip, how they're going to forward to deploy forces and how they are going to provide capabilities to the joint force commander.

[00:49:33] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** Um, I think another thing to look at, and this may not be overt, this may be more implied, is going to be will this initiative survive a change in leadership or an administration? Because as you know, um, if a force of personality, um, leaves an organization, All of their initiatives tend to go with them. So we'll see how that plays out.

[00:49:55] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** And then the last thing, um, very cynically, um, you know, having been on both the [00:50:00] giving and receiving end of a lot of these reorganizations, um, there are members of Congress that are going to look straight at the secretary and the chief and are going to say, what does this mean to general officer billets in my state or in my district?

[00:50:12] **Todd "Sledge" Harmer:** That's sad, but that's the reality of the representative government that we have.

[00:50:17] **John "Slick" Baum:** want to get to the last question here, Charles, I've got to ask you, we've been talking a lot. What is new in space? You know, we just recorded a special discussion about the new Russian threats. So anything else we should be looking out for?

[00:50:29] **Charles Galbreath:** Yeah. So sick. Thanks. Uh, as I mentioned earlier, there's something new happening every day in the space force. And that goes doubly true for the space community. I'm sure everybody was tracking the landing of intuitive machines on the moon. And so why am I bringing this up here in a national security discussion forum?

[00:50:47] **Charles Galbreath:** It's an interesting model. NASA science. Yeah. Yeah. Basically contracted a commercial organization to put some payload, submission capability on the moon by doing [00:51:00] so they got what they needed on the moon at a much cheaper cost. And in a much quicker timeline, can the space force and other defense organizations look at similar models for delivering capabilities that can be leveraged.

[00:51:14] **Charles Galbreath:** So it's just something to consider, but back to the space for specifically, uh, this didn't get a lot of news, but the space development agency. Launched all of its tranche zero satellites, so that's 27 satellites, 9 conducting, uh, 19 conducting data transport and communications and 8 conducting missile warning.

[00:51:33] **Charles Galbreath:** 27 satellites put on orbit within 42 months of contract award. That's fast, folks. Um, and they are not stopping. Tranche 1 is going to begin launching this September. Um, victus knocks, which is a lot of folks who remember was a tactically responsive launch capability that was demonstrated back in September after completing its mission and five months on orbit, it has successfully deorbited, uh, [00:52:00] after mission accomplishment.

[00:52:01] **Charles Galbreath:** So a lot has been happening in space. I hope people are. Watching the news as carefully as I am and picking up on all of these great activities going on, uh, but, but thanks for the question, Slick.

[00:52:12] **John "Slick" Baum:** Yeah, of course. And Charles, we'll table this for another time, but you know, the, the, the flying community learned this a long time ago that the commercialization, you know, uh, is obviously much more efficient than the government solely trying to do it by itself.

[00:52:24] **John "Slick" Baum:** Just look at the, uh. The U S mail service back, uh, back in the early days. So we'll, we'll have to tee that up for another discussion later on. So, and I agree with you, there's so many wins going on every day. So, uh, it's, it's pretty exciting. but we are at the end of our time. So I just want to say, thank you to everybody.

[00:52:38] **John "Slick" Baum:** General Abdullah Stutz, Charles Gonzo sledge. It's always awesome catching up and, and, uh, really appreciate the contributions to the rendezvous. With that, I'd like to extend a big thank you to our guests for joining in today's discussion. I'd also like to extend a big thank you to our listeners for your continued support and for tuning into today's show.

[00:52:57] **John "Slick" Baum:** If you like what you've heard today, don't forget to hit that [00:53:00] like button and follow or subscribe to the Aerospace Advantage. You can also leave a comment to let us know what you think about our show or areas you think we should explore further. As always, you can join in on the conversation by following the https: otter.

[00:53:13] **John "Slick" Baum:** ai Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn. And you can always find us at Mitchell aerospace power. org. Thanks again for joining us. And we'll see you next time. Stay safe and check six.