

**Statement of**  
**Ms. Carol DiBattiste**  
**Nominee for Under Secretary of the Air Force**  
**before the**  
**Committee on Armed Services,**  
**U.S. Senate**  
  
**August 3, 1999**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the nominee to be Under Secretary of the Air Force. I want to thank the President and Secretary Cohen for giving me this extraordinary opportunity to continue to serve my country and the men and women of the United States Air Force.

I would also like to take a moment to express my thanks to Acting Secretary Peters and the staff of the secretariat and Air Staff who have so graciously supported me through this confirmation process. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity of working together on the many issues that affect the lives of our Air Force members and the modernization of our force.

When I enlisted in the Air Force after high school, I never imagined that some day I would sit here before this Committee as the nominee to be Under Secretary of the Air Force. As a young recruit, there were often times my friends and I would talk about how we could make things better if only we were "in charge." Now, I am being offered the opportunity and responsibility to "take charge" and make things better. It is a wonderful opportunity which, if confirmed, I assure you I will not waste.

My 20 years of Air Force service was an extremely important part of my life. The Air Force taught me valuable skills, paid for my college degree, trained me to be an officer, and finally paid for my law school education. I am very proud of the years I served in both the enlisted and officer ranks of the Air Force, and I remember fondly the camaraderie, teamwork, and sense of purpose I shared with the men and women of the Air Force when I was one of them. I look forward with the greatest anticipation to signing up for another tour.

I have followed with great interest over the years the many changes that have occurred in our Air Force. As a recruiter and later a judge advocate, I saw first-hand what inspired men and women to join the Air Force and, in some cases, what caused them to leave. In many ways, these things have not changed a great deal over the years. Whether active duty, guard, or reserve, our members care about being part of a team that is doing something right for our country. They want to be able to provide for their families, have the tools to accomplish the mission, and have a reasonable expectation of stability to pursue personal goals in education, recreation, or community involvement. I would like the opportunity to help make these modest goals a reality for our Air Force men and women.

Today's Air Force is one of great technological innovation and skill. However, it is also one facing tremendous societal and economic challenges in a demanding and often unpredictable international environment. National

security requires flexibility, speed, range, and global perspective. The United States Air Force offers a unique and unmatched capability to meet these requirements. Whether the need is for the initial delivery of critical manpower and supplies, for aerospace superiority over the combat environment, for battlefield awareness through space-based sensors and integrated airborne systems, or for strategic lift to meet the requirements of redeployment, the capability is inherent in our Air Force. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the hard work that keeps our Air Force superior and on the cutting edge.

Increasingly global commitments, the post-cold war drawdown, and a healthy civilian economy all contribute to management challenges for the Air Force. I have no doubt but that I would be joining a team with the vision to meet these challenges. Innovative solutions such as the Expeditionary Aerospace Force will help create stability and predictability in the lives of our troops. That, coupled with pay and retirement reforms that the Administration and Congress are working so hard to implement, should help bring retention back to needed levels. At the same time, we must continue a carefully crafted and phased modernization program to ensure that our airmen face the next battle with the least possible risk. The opportunities to streamline, modernize, and stabilize the Air Force are helping it prepare for the challenges of the next decade. I would look forward, with great anticipation, to being part of this dynamic transformation.

Finally, I join each of you in your recent praise of our brave men and women as they return from their victory in the Balkans. I join all Americans in taking great pride in their tremendous achievements. Daily, the Air Force demonstrates its ability to respond quickly, across the spectrum from peace to conflict, and from combat to humanitarian relief. Air Force men and women have come to represent the promise of comfort and security to millions beyond the shores of our own country. The combination of talent and dedication to duty inspires us all to work hard for their welfare.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to a strong partnership with you and this committee. Thank you. I would like to answer your questions at this time.