



The Secretary's Vector

***Dr. James G. Roche
Secretary of the Air Force***

12 March 2004

Service Before Self

By now, many of you have likely heard the news that I have asked that my nomination to serve as Secretary of the Army be withdrawn. Given the range of issues before the United States Senate in a busy legislative year, I accept that it was unlikely that my nomination would be considered any time soon. In the interests of the Department of Defense, with the pressing issues facing our Air Force in the months and years ahead, and with the Army's need for a full complement of executive leadership, I decided it was best that I withdraw from further consideration.

I want to assure each of you that while I was honored to have the President's trust and confidence to serve as Secretary of the Army, Diane and I are thrilled at the opportunity to remain in our beloved Air Force. And I deeply appreciate the confidence that the President and Secretary Rumsfeld have in me to stay with the Air Force and my distinguished partner, General John Jumper.

I am honored to continue serving this nation, and the terrific Airmen I have come to know and love over the past few years. We have many pressing national security issues that require our sustained attention. The threats to our nation demand an air and space force of the finest Airmen, the best warfighting tools we can deliver, and a focused effort to integrate those capabilities to produce decisive combat effects. We are working diligently on a range of new capabilities -- advanced strike systems such as the F/A-22, advanced ground and airborne moving target indicator systems, new smart tankers, an advanced portfolio of manned, unmanned and space sensing systems, advanced weapons, transformational communications, and many others.

We need the stability of continuing engaged leadership as we address important challenges such as the operational test and evaluation of the F/A-22; assuming management of the F-35; increasing unity of effort among the Air Force, NRO, and Intelligence Community; enhancing space support to the warfighter; and continuing our reforms at the Air Force Academy. I am committed, along with General Jumper, to developing a comprehensive solution to sexual assault in our Air Force; ensuring a safe environment, encouraging reporting of offenses, a thorough investigation of incidents, and providing focused and sustained support to victims. As always, I intend to apply myself to the full range of important matters facing the Air Force, including leading the professional Airmen who are serving our country so proudly. Together, we will continue to make the Air Force better.

I am extremely proud of your contributions to protecting America, and I am honored to continue serving as your Secretary of the Air Force.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James G. Roche".

**James G. Roche
Secretary of the Air Force**