Thanks for that introduction, Russ (Brigadier General Zajtchuk). It's great to be with you. That was a powerful presentation by General Zajtchuk. A lot of thoughts run through my brain when I see those pictures of our casualties in Vietnam and I think about what those men did.

Hippocrates wrote, "He who would be a surgeon, join the Army and follow it."

Today the United States Army is in 75 countries. We have 25,000 men and women in your Army serving around the world away from their home stations. We have 125,000 soldiers stationed overseas. And wherever we have soldiers, Army medics are with them. Army surgeons, physicians, medics, specialists are with them -- keeping them healthy and, in fact, alive. And what you are doing here in McLean is vital to the health of the United States Army, certainly for all of the Services, and I know all of the Services are represented here.

It is not only important for the health and well-being of our soldiers, but I believe we are also reaching out and touching the American community at large. It is not the first time that the United States Army has done that, and I certainly don't need to go down the list of accomplishments of the physicians, the researchers, and the officers, the non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the United States Army Medical Department who have served this nation since the earliest days of the Republic. Their accomplishments are legend -- all the way from yellow fever to water purification to battlefield medicine.

And the United States Army is still out there on the leading edge, and certainly telemedicine is a case in point.

This morning I was in a hearing on Capitol Hill. Senator Stevens was asking me about telemedicine and the role it will play in his State of Alaska. And I was pleased to tell him after the hearing, once again, about the experience of the United States Army in Macedonia -- through telemedicine physicians were able to reach out and touch a soldier on the operating table in Skopje and saved his life.

Now, in keeping with that thought, reaching out and touching someone and saving his or her life, I believe that through digital technology we will in fact not only make the
soldier more lethal, more capable -- make them more capable of responding to the world as it is, not as we wish it to be, as it is, which is very dangerous.

Let me give you a footnote: since the Berlin Wall came down, the United States Army has issued over 700 Purple Hearts. That's for wounds in action or death in action against an armed enemy -- over 700! That's more Purple Hearts than were issued during the Cold War if you do not include Korea and Vietnam. And that's since 1989 -- six years and 700 Purple Hearts! This is still a very dangerous world.

The microprocessor -- digital technology will give us more lethal and capable soldiers. And digital technology will give us soldiers who are better protected. We must protect our men and women because we cannot afford to lose them unnecessarily. Each and every one of them is precious. Precious to their leaders, precious to their loved ones, and precious to the United States of America. And what you are doing here is enabling us to leverage the strength of our country and leverage the power of the large medical centers found in our big cities and universities throughout America and reach out there and put your very competent hands on these young people.

I know one of the things that you will discuss here are the monitors that the Army is working on for our soldiers, so that we can, in fact, monitor their vital signs and find them on the battlefield. You heard General Zajtchuk's presentation saying that several of the soldiers wounded in that firefight in Vietnam could not be found in time to save their lives. I know it strikes many of you in this room as odd that we cannot find each other on the battlefield. I would tell you that sometimes we hardly know where we are on the battlefield. In the heat of battle, people go down -- in the tall grass, in the trees, and the woods -- and it is hard to find them.

The type of technology we are talking about would not only track them, but also enable us to read their vital signs to find out what is wrong so that we can administer the right medical care -- care leveraged by telemedicine. And, of course, the technology that you are talking about here today not only provides us more capability for medical care, but it also enables us to know more about what's going on on the battlefield. So this technology -- telemedicine -- projecting images over long distances, is enabling us to project power in much more efficient ways, and it's also giving us more capability on the battlefields.

So, I think if for nothing else, what you are doing here has enormous implications for the United States Army and the United States of America.

I am just back from a trip across the Pacific. I was in the Pacific for a week, and everywhere I go I find people talking about these capabilities. As a matter of fact, we are beginning to see some of the telemedicine capabilities come into the Army, and certainly into the State of Alaska. Senator Stevens and his people are very upbeat about the potential of this technology. You should know that we and the Navy used it on the hospital ship Comfort during the early phases of our operations in Haiti.
I would say to you, for those of you who need encouragement, that the Army is prepared to expend resources in the area. I'm ready to expend resources because I think that it is through what you are doing that I am, in fact, going to be able to protect the soldiers and make them more capable. And by keeping them alive and preserving their strength, we will be better able to do all that America wants its soldiers to do.

Now, I know that some of these technologies are embryonic. Certainly the people monitors are. It is going to takes lots of money to develop them, to make them, and to manufacture them so that they will, in fact, be soldier-proof. And I think we are going in the right direction. And if I can save one life, it will pay for itself.

So I appreciate very much what you are doing here. I appreciate your energy. I am delighted to see so many of you. And I am delighted to see so many people from industry and corporate America -- the people who can make things happen.

Let me conclude by reminding you that there is no "silver bullet." There is no technology that will sanitize warfare. It takes men and women of courage to protect the United States of America. There are no bloodless wars, and you have to put your troops on the ground. If you have to put your troops on the ground, you ought to do everything you can to take care of them. You do everything in your power to save their lives and to protect them. But make no mistake about it -- remember the lessons of Antietam, Gettysburg, Normandy, Inchon. It is all the same. Put you troops on the ground, make them as capable as possible, and then protect them the best way you can. But understand that you are going to have pay the price to keep the United States of America free.

Thanks to all of you for coming. Thanks for your energy. Thanks for your support.