

*Remarks by Rep. Chris Smith (R-Manchester)  
Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst  
August 24, 2023*

Special thanks to the distinguished Commander of the 305<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing—Colonel Elizabeth Hanson and Col. Anthony Smith of the 87th Air Base Wing.

Thank you for your extraordinary leadership and amazing service to our country.

Thank you for inviting me to keynote this celebration.

As you all know, the 305<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing has a distinguished lineage stretching back to World War II. Playing a critical role in every major conflict since, through the post-9/11 conflicts, the US engagement in Syria, performing miracles during the evacuation of Afghanistan, and to this day supporting critical missions supporting Ukraine in its war with Russia, you continue the “Can Do” tradition of those that came before you.

I have no doubt the women and men of the 305<sup>th</sup> will make good use of this new facility to house, maintain, and keep our KC-46’s, C-17s, and future airframes, mission ready to defend the United States and our interests across the globe.

Yesterday, I spoke at a [rally](#) in front of the People’s Republic of China’s Embassy in Washington DC, protesting another egregious outrage, the forced repatriation of refugees to North Korea. Some 2,600 brave Individuals who had escaped the brutality of Kim Jong Un and the barbarity of the Hermit Kingdom, are about to be forced to return—likely to torture or death.

This is who the Chinese Communist Party truly is. A barbaric, authoritarian regime hostile to the individual and human rights, led by Xi Jinping, the man who infamously said “show no mercy” as he unleashed genocide on the Uyghurs—a gross abuse that continues till today—and a regime that hijacked democracy on Hong Kong, and daily threatens in both words and provocative deeds to invade our close friend and ally Taiwan.

We have nothing against the Chinese people—only the dictatorship. We stand with the oppressed—and that especially includes the Chinese people who suffer the most—not the oppressor.

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives—in a near unanimous vote—passed legislation I authored called the [Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act of 2023](#)— a bill to combat the Chinese Communist Party’s barbaric program of killing young people to steal their organs.

Each year tens of thousands of perfectly healthy men and women—average age 28—mostly Falun Gong practitioners and Uyghurs but also Tibetan Buddhists and Christians, are [murdered by the Chinese Communist Party to procure their inner organs](#) for transplant to make huge profits.

The Chinese Communist Party flagrantly commits every human rights abuse imaginable—including torture, sex and labor trafficking, religious persecution, forced abortion and the crushing and jailing of democracy activists and journalists.

The United States—and free people around the globe—now face a world of rapidly evolving threats that absolutely includes an existential military threat from China.

Yes, there is a horrific war in Europe as Putin continues to commit war crimes and genocide in Ukraine.

The Middle East remains a cauldron of continued conflict as Iran surges to acquire nuclear weapons and the means to deliver devastating strikes on Israel, the United States and our allies.

Almost daily, North Korea rattles the nuclear sword and threatens.

Africa is a continent with potential, but sadly is consumed by violence by military coups and terrorist organizations.

However, in the last three decades, the Chinese Communist Party has built—with technology sold or stolen from U.S. corporations a vast military approaching the level of a near-peer with the United States.

General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, is clear in his ambitions for China, and seeks to displace the rules based, US led, international order, with Chinese hegemony of the Western Pacific and beyond.

In addition to economic, and asymmetric strategies to undermine and displace the United States, the Chinese Communist Party plans to dominate Asia and the Pacific through force, which rely upon denying the US access to critical areas and key installations. These include maritime areas in the East and South China Seas and the airspace surrounding Taiwan and the Philippines.

The CCP believes the balance of military power in the Pacific has shifted in their favor. This misplaced self-perception of invulnerability is a sign that America must reestablish robust deterrence.

It is critical now—more than ever—that that the United States must enhance and invest in the capabilities that provide deterrence and project lethality across the globe to make the Chinese Communist Party—and any malign actor who seeks to oppress others—think twice about armed conquest.

Perhaps no mission is more critical to projecting and sustaining critical assets abroad than your rapid air mobility mission.

The strategic airlift and air refueling missions of the 305<sup>th</sup> are the key to American power projection and are vital in the sustainment of American security.

The 305<sup>th</sup>'s unrivaled readiness and capabilities are what connects our nation's strategic vision with the realities faced everyday by our servicemembers across the globe.

Whether it is the rapid deployment of American assets to conflict zones, sustaining military activities through vital airlift capacity, delivering humanitarian assistance in a time of crisis, or providing air refueling operations at home or across the globe, the Airmen of the 305<sup>th</sup> get the job done.

The KC-46 and this new hanger we inaugurate today, are yet another tangible recognition of the vital role the 305<sup>th</sup> plays in defending freedom and ensuring the security of the United States.

Above all, this investment is an expression of the deep and abiding faith we place in each of you and your willingness to answer our nation's call to serve. Words are simply inadequate to express our gratitude.