SECURING THE HIGH GROUND Agile Combat Airpower



2010 Combat Air Force Strategic Plan





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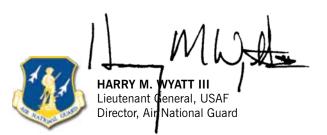


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Foreword

Securing the High Ground is our strategy to deliver agile combat airpower to the Nation through the joint force. The Combat Air Force (CAF) is currently at a crossroad where tough strategic choices must be made to drive our actions and ensure our vision is realized. The CAF will focus its efforts on today's fight while keeping a steady, unwavering commitment to ensure we defend the homeland, strengthen our nuclear deterrence and meet tomorrow's challenges. Fully nested under the United States Air Force's Strategic Plan, this strategy identifies our priorities, challenges, and the imperatives the CAF must deliver in support of our Nation's security requirements. In this dangerous and unpredictable world, where threats exist across the spectrum of conflict both overseas and at home, this plan offers a method to prioritize and improve combat capabilities in CAF mission areas.

Securing the High Ground is operationally comprehensive, detailing the CAF's plan from strategic to tactical levels. It prioritizes our activities in the missions the Nation and joint force expect us to deliver: those foundational core functions that enable Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power. Moreover, this plan promotes an adaptive mindset, ensuring a properly postured force is in the right place at the right time. This posture creates an atmosphere of strategic deterrence, balanced capabilities, and readiness to defeat competitors via agile combat airpower.

The operational environment includes fiscal constraints which, if not properly managed, can and will negatively affect both our capacity and capability to satisfy Combatant Commanders' requirements. Our mitigation strategy is to develop a smaller, more capable force that is effective across the wide range of military challenges it faces now and in the future. Our Airmen are the key to success in delivering this agile combat airpower. Their flexibility and ingenuity, honed through balanced training, will enable the CAF to generate the success our Nation's security demands.

The CAF is an evolving body which requires combat capabilities, infrastructure, security, support, and communications to guarantee mission success. Securing the High Ground helps deliver innovative strategy and unrivaled combat capabilities to our Combatant Commanders. It provides the CAF its mission and vision while focusing the development, sustainment, and execution of the preeminent combat airpower of America's joint force. Securing the High Ground focuses on the three most important aspects of the CAF: People, Power, and Places. Our goal is to protect the Nation, operate from a position of strength, and do so in a worldwide environment. This vision is a key to the CAF and provides us Global Power for America!

Our Airmen are the key to success in delivering this agile combat airpower. Their flexibility and ingenuity, honed through balanced training, will enable the CAF to generate the success our Nation's security demands.



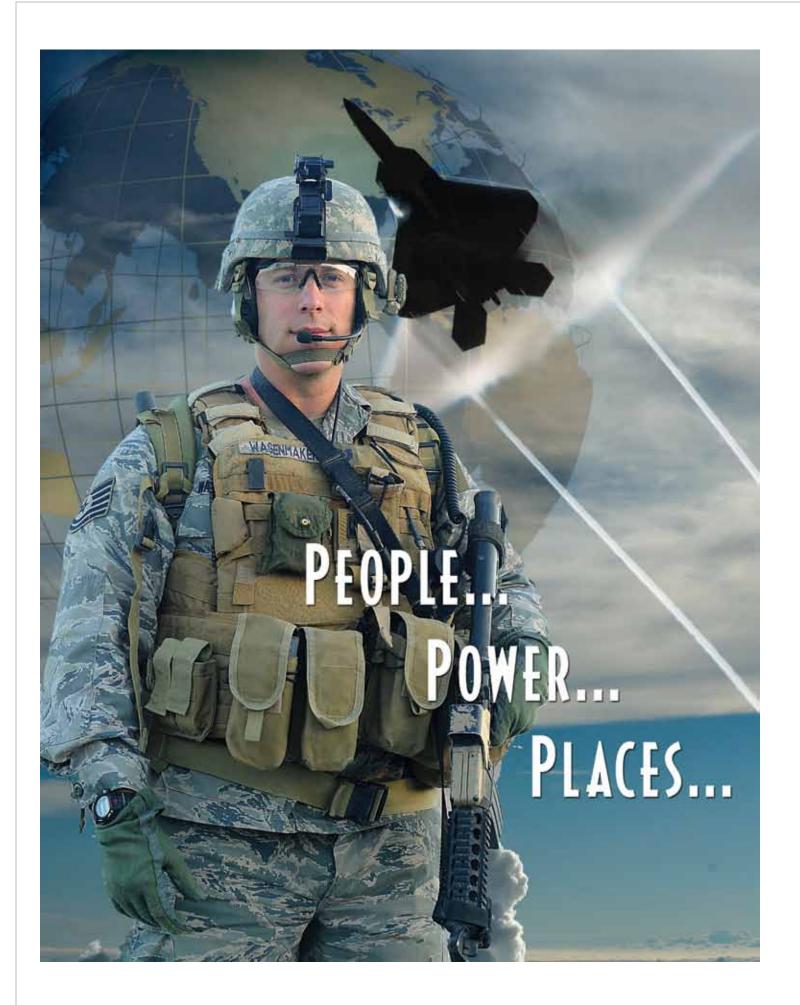
THE COMBAT AIR FORCE DELIVERS GLOBAL VIGILANCE AND GLOBAL POWER FOR AMERICA... THE ABILITY TO SENSE, INFLUENCE, DISSUADE, DETER AND STRIKE ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, IN ANY CONDITION.

THE CAF IS AMERICA'S ASYMMETRIC ADVANTAGE AND THE BACKBONE OF ITS SECURITY.

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((*In the development of air power, one has to look ahead and not backward and figure out what is going to happen, not too much what has happened."* Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell, United States Army Air Service



INTRODUCTION

Securing the High Ground is the 2010 strategic plan for the Combat Air Force (CAF). It defines the CAF, lays out the future operational environment, identifies priorities and outlines the strategic approach required to enable the United States Air Force's delivery of agile combat airpower in defense of our Nation. The CAF, through the control, protection, and exploitation of air, space, and cyberspace, ensures Freedom of Action for the joint force and the Nation. These domains collectively are the new "high ground" of Joint operations, much as the high surface position, such as a ridge line in traditional land warfare is pivotal.

Today, the United States is at war, facing a fluid, dynamic, and incredibly complex security environment. This environment is characterized by a myriad of potential adversaries capable of operating across the spectrum of conflict. It is a time when warfare or conflict is described as morphing into so-called "hybrid" warfare. Hybrid warfare or conflict occurs where adversaries employ strategies or capabilities that span the spectrum of conflict or levels of sophistication to achieve objectives. It is imperative the CAF understands this "change" and ensures it is properly organized, trained and equipped to deliver agile combat airpower in this environment.

The challenges presented in Department of Defense (DoD) approved future operational environments are numerous. From conducting our twentieth consecutive year of continuous combat operations to the fiscal realities faced by our Nation, there has been little to no opportunity to evaluate and reset the force to tackle these challenges. This strategy addresses these challenges by establishing a path to produce a smaller, more capable force and prioritizing actions that will increase the effectiveness and capabilities of our forces. This will be accomplished by improving warfighter integration and our agility to meet any challenge. The outcome will provide the Nation agile combat airpower and ensure the CAF meets or exceeds the expectations of the joint force in the current fight, provides strategic deterrence against potential adversaries, and is ready and able to win any future conflicts. We must balance our efforts in order to execute CAF assigned core functions, within the fiscal constraints, with a clear understanding of the associated risk.



A B-2 deployed to Guam.

Agile combat airpower is our strategy for success with a smaller, more capable force; relying on Airmen with agility, who can operate effectively across a wide range of military operations. Airmen are the key ingredient in the execution of this strategy. Their flexibility and ingenuity are required to deliver desired effects across the wide range of military operations. This requires a balance between winning today's fights and ensuring we can win those of the future. The CAF must focus its efforts on ensuring our Airmen are prepared to meet these challenges. Our education, training, and evaluation efforts must prepare them for the environment in which they will operate. This is not an area where we should be willing to take increased risk. It is imperative that our Airmen are able to fully integrate and operate with not only our sister services but with our allies and potential coalition partners. The operational environments we face demand this and it is how the CAF will assure it has the ability to deliver precise effects. Finally, we must team with our industry partners to deliver capabilities and multi-role platforms that enable our Airmen to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict.

Strategy is simply the art and science of using our capabilities to achieve objectives. To build an effective strategy the CAF must have a clear understanding of the current and future security environments it will face across the spectrum of conflict. The CAF must understand the adaptive nature and operational stratagems of potential adversaries. This plan presents the CAF strategic approach to meet Combatant Commander requirements with a smaller, more capable force structured within given constraints. It is the link connecting National, Department of Defense and Air Force strategic guidance to CAF activities, providing Global Vigilance and Global Power through the integration of air, space, and cyberspace capabilities.

Securing the High Ground provides over-arching guidance to CAF commanders to facilitate the development, integration and execution of CAF forces by Air Force Component headquarters in support of joint force Commanders. This strategy articulates what the CAF provides the Nation and its vision for the future. It integrates and develops the Air Force Core Functions, and identifies, prioritizes, and guides the development of required capabilities.

((... competition among armed forces is moving toward the space-air domain and is extending from the aviation domain to near space and even deep space . . . having control of space and air means having control of the ground, the seas and oceans, and the electromagnetic space, which also means having the strategic initiative in one's hands . . ."

31 Oct 2009, General Xu, Chinese PLA

CAF DEFINITION, MISSION AND VISION

Traditionally, the CAF was seen as solely aircraft engaging in combat to destroy the enemy. But today, the definition of the CAF is more than just fighters and bombers operating in the air. Agile combat airpower is our air, space, cyberspace, and battlefield Airmen, organizations and capabilities delivering Global Vigilance and Power for the Nation. The CAF's mission is to:

Fly, Fight, and Win -- integrating capabilities across air, space, and cyberspace to deliver precise coercive effects in defense of our Nation and its global interests.

Our mission defines who and what we are and why we exist. The CAF's ability to control, protect, and exploit the air, space, and cyberspace domains provides an asymmetric advantage to our Nation. The core of the CAF is our Airmen - those active duty, reservists, guard members, and civilians - who maintain, service, support, protect, supply, and execute the mission. The CAF is the Nation's deterrence and response force of first and last resort, capable of delivering precise effects across the full spectrum of conflict globally and rapidly in defense of our Nation. This flexibility and responsiveness provides the Nation the agile combat power it needs from its air, space, and cyberspace forces.



An A-10 flying a combat patrol over Afghanistan.

The essence of the CAF is combat power. Coercive effects are what the CAF provides. Coercion is defined as the "threat of force or the use of force" to achieve stated objectives. Airpower theory depicts coercion as a continuum with deterrence on one end, represented by global reach, forward presence, military engagement and the credible threat of force; in the middle, limited use of force represented by the ability to deny or disable adversary capabilities; and, on the far end of the continuum, destruction represented by the application of brute force. The CAF's ability to deliver coercive effects, through the delivery of precise effects across the spectrum of conflict, is the source of its strength and credibility.

The CAF plans, develops, and executes integrated, precise airpower options for our Nation. From the Air Force Component Headquarters to investment commands to our individual Airmen, the CAF is a collection of Air Force organizations, commands and forces tasked to generate specific precise effects from the air, space, and cyberspace.



An Atlas V launches with a Wideband Global Satellite Communications system.

The CAF has and will continue to provide warfighters with the most capable airpower in the world, engaging with partner nations, deterring adversaries before they take action and swiftly defeating enemies that threaten our national interests. This is why the CAF's vision is clear:

Dominant Combat Air Force...Always!

To ensure our Nation's security and its global interests we must always maintain this status; our vision will be backed by credible performance and capabilities. We must focus our efforts on achieving this vision. Dominant combat airpower does more than just ensure success during conflicts. It deters adversaries from threatening not only our interests, but those of our allies, partners, and like-minded nations.

THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

((Our Nation will continue to confront a multi-faceted strategic landscape whose only consistent feature is the broad array of complex threats and resulting uncertainties. As an armed force, our strategic challenge is to do our part so that our country can prevail in a protracted and irregular global struggle against elements of violent extremism and other irreconcilable actors who cannot be so easily deterred, compelled, or otherwise influenced." General Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff

The 21st century strategic environment presents an uncertain and dynamic picture framed by ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and numerous other regions; a broad range of potential conflicts and adversaries; unprecedented information access; and a fiscally constrained environment due to the recent economic downturn. Rapidly evolving technology enables a single individual act or person to generate strategic effects. It compresses decision-making time and blurs the traditional levels of both conflict and command. Technology and knowledge, combined with intent, allows almost anyone to influence populations and leadership actions.

Although the nature of conflict is unchanging, the growing number of actors with the potential to produce effects across the spectrum creates added complexity and challenge. From non-state actors, terrorists, and criminal networks exploiting seams created by "ungoverned spaces," to rising regional powers struggling with world perceptions, the complexity of the global security environment is increasing. The potential for conflict is increasing because of these factors combined with the proliferation of critical military and information technologies, growing ideological conflicts, evolving alliances, rising economic gaps, shifting demographics and growing demand for resources. The future strategic environment will be shaped by the interaction of globalization, economic disparities, and competition for resources. There will be increased diffusion of technology and information networks that will allow unprecedented ability to threaten advanced nations and have the potential to disrupt key international institutions and world order.

Accordingly, the CAF must prepare to deter, dissuade or defeat irregular, catastrophic and disruptive challenges. These challenges cut across the conflict spectrum and may present national-level threats. These challenges are summarized in seven principal, future strategic concerns:

- Violent extremism with regional and global reach
- The lack of stability, security and integration of former Third World, or non-integrating "gap" nations and regions into the larger functioning "core" of peaceful, progressive states
- Weapons-of-Mass Destruction attacks on the U.S. homeland, interests abroad or our partners
- Operations in the global commons becoming increasingly challenged and contested
- · Disruptive space and cyberspace threats
- The rise of a new peer or near-peer rival or competitor nation-state
- Maintaining allied, coalition and partner focus on shared strategic vision and objectives in an often ambiguous threat environment

Most Likely Future Environment: Persistent Irregular Challenges

The most likely future environment is one characterized by the United States: 1) facing irregular challenges to include continued counterinsurgency and support to counterinsurgency efforts in partner nations; 2) maintaining its global leadership position amidst competitive pressure from peers or near peers; 3) global engagement in undergoverned and ungoverned regions; and 4) stability, security and transition operations following US, coalition or United Nations (UN) peace enforcement activities.

Most Challenging Future Environment: Two Nearly Simultaneous Global Challenges

The most dangerous future environment is one in which two nearly simultaneous global challenges threaten U.S., allied and coalition interests. For planning purposes, this is defined as any two of the following: 1) catastrophic effects, within the US homeland and/or against critical US national interests abroad; 2) a major combat operation against a peer or near-peer competitor; 3) a new, irregular campaign on the scale of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF and OEF); or 4) a greatly increased level of effort in OPERATION NEW DAWN or OEF.

(*Although attacks in cybersphere do not involve use of physical weapons, their destructive impacts, physical and otherwise, may be no less lethal to societies.*"

Jeffrey R. Cooper "Another View of Information Warfare"

COMMANDERS' INTENT

Purpose

Securing the High Ground guides expanded warfighter integration within the CAF to ensure our mission is met and our vision is realized. It is designed to ensure the CAF remains the Nation's asymmetric advantage and its most ready and effective full spectrum deterrence and response force. The execution of this strategy will expand CAF-led Core Functions to meet increasing and emerging threats while pursuing better ways to address the growing challenges across the spectrum of conflict. This ensures the delivery of agile combat airpower to meet the needs of today's conflicts while preparing for the future security requirements our Nation will face.



An MC-12W landing at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

(*We serve because our service has a noble purpose - the preservation of our Constitution and an American way of life. We serve because the Nation, our American ideals, and the people we serve are worth all the dedication and sacrifice required for their defense, worth everything we have as individuals to give even life itself. ...*"

Michael Donley, Secretary of the Air Force



A B-1B flies a combat patrol over Afghanistan in support of Opetation Enduring Freedom.



Louisiana ANG F-15s and Langley AFB F-22s during a training flight.

Securing the High Ground is framed in terms of Ends, Ways and Means. It outlines how the CAF will defend the Nation in the most likely and most challenging strategic environments.

Method

Securing the High Ground is framed in terms of Ends, Ways and Means. It outlines how the CAF will defend the Nation in the most likely and most challenging strategic environments. Ends are the effects the CAF delivers to the Combatant Commanders through Air Force Component Headquarters in defense of our Nation. CAF Ends are designed to ensure the Air Force and the Nation's objectives are achieved. Ways are our operational concepts and Core Function Master Plans (CFMPs) are "how" our forces and capabilities are integrated to deliver required effects. Means are the CAF forces and capabilities that are developed through a doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) approach to provide required solutions for the challenges and implications of the operational environment. The guidance, priorities and tasks flowing from this strategy direct CAF implementation of the Air Force's strategy in the near- (0 to 5 years), mid- (5 to 15 years) and far-term (+15 years) timeframes. The effects resulting from this strategy are generated by Air Force Component Headquarters through the integration and control of CAF forces in collaboration with Mobility Air Force (MAF) forces and other US Services/coalition forces. It is underwritten by the CAF commands providing the organization, training and equipping function of our Service.

CAF Priorities

PRIORITY 1 - DEVELOP INNOVATIVE, MOTIVATED CAF AIRMEN.



Maj Kristin Goodwin and Capt Jenn Jeffords, B-2 pilots.

CAF Airmen are our most important resource. We will deliberately develop and prepare Airmen for success in all current operations, from irregular to homeland defense to nuclear deterrence. We will develop warriors and leaders with cultural/international perspectives, team building skills, a strategic understanding of all conflict phases, and warfighting expertise in all coalition and joint military operations. The CAF will identify innovative, motivated, and highly-qualified Airmen for retention. We will maintain an environment that motivates Airmen and takes care of their families in order to retain our best and brightest. We will improve the family support system down to unit level to ensure it is pro-active and responsive - especially for families of deployed Airmen. We will deliberately develop and retain Airmen in sufficient numbers to execute the missions: advocate capabilities on joint, coalition, and Headquarters Air Force (HAF) staffs; and grow senior leaders for the future.

CAF Airmen are our most important resource... We will maintain an environment that motivates Airmen and takes care of their families...



A1C Charles Edwards prepares to fuel a B-1B.

PRIORITY 2 - ENHANCE OPERATIONS, CROSS-DOMAIN INTEGRATION AND EFFECTIVENESS NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE.



TACP on patrol in Afghanistan.

The CAF will tailor organizations, processes, and infrastructure at all levels to be more adaptive and responsive to the constantly changing threat, especially irregular warfare (IW). We will develop IW-focused education and training to win the current fight. The CAF will develop Airmen who bring Air Force IW expertise and perspective to key decision-making positions on joint, coalition, and Air Force staffs. We will normalize IWstressed billets, such as security forces, transportation, and Tactical Air Control Party (TACP). The CAF will fully support Combatant Commanders as tasked in ongoing operations against irregular adversaries. We will improve CAF capability and capacity to build international partnerships and foreign internal defense. We will shape professional military education (PME) curriculum to increase IW focus and develop innovative problem solvers.

PRIORITY 3 - IMPROVE WARFIGHTING ORGANIZATIONS, PROCESSES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.



53 EWG at Eglin AFB.

We will develop standards and measures to quantify operational effectiveness in order to identify core functions requiring improvement by 2012. The CAF will improve tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to facilitate warfighter integration within the AF, while identifying integration improvement areas with our joint, allied and coalition partners by 2012. We will properly position the Air Force to command and control the global counterair fight with a specific focus on integrated air and missile defense. In conjunction with the US Navy, the CAF will develop and implement an air and sea concept to improve joint force operations in current and future security environments. We will increase our ability to operate in degraded air, space, and cyberspace domains.



A Pararescueman fast ropes from an HH-60.

The CAF will enhance joint Battlespace Awareness and electronic warfare by improving Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) operations against irregular adversaries, and in contested and denied environments while reducing risk by modernizing defensive cyberspace forces to provide mission assurance for the Air Force's operational and critical support networks.

PRIORITY 4 - BALANCE RECAPITALIZATION, MODERNIZATION, SUSTAINMENT AND TRAINING.

We will balance recapitalization and modernization to maintain our ability to defeat any adversary through the far term by achieving, sustaining, and training the force.

We must ensure the CAF delivers freedom of action to the joint force by maintaining and enhancing our air and space superiority capability, including space control, while ensuring mission assurance throughout cyberspace.

We will enhance Global Precision Attack by improving and enhancing our long-range persistent strike, anti-access and positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) capabilities.

The CAF will balance manned and unmanned capabilities throughout our core functions.



Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle X-45C.

We will modernize our nuclear command and control capabilities. In addition, we will develop strategies to sustain and modernize our nuclear deterrent aircraft and inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

We will pursue directed energy solutions through continued development and fielding of the technology.

We will develop a posture and basing strategy for the fifth-generation fleet based on strategic priorities in the future operating environment.

The CAF will improve the integration and training of personnel from all five Total Force components (Regular Component, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, civil servants and contractors) in order to improve operational effectiveness and availability while transforming to new missions, platforms, and capabilities.

This strategy relies on the flexibility and versatility of our Airmen and the improving, multi-role capabilities our industry partners provide in the coming years. It will be a smaller force than we are used to, but, if our efforts are synchronized and well executed, we will achieve a more capable force in the end.

ENDSTATE

The CAF is positioned to deliver agile combat airpower in order to remain the Nation's asymmetric advantage and its most ready and effective full spectrum deterrence and response force.



Maj David Skalicky flies an F-22 over Langley AFB.

FRAMEWORK

Securing the High Ground's strategic planning construct is a vehicle for visualizing the CAF strategy and the interrelationships of our Ends, Ways and Means illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page.

CAF ENDS

Dissuasion and Deterrence are the dual abilities to discourage potential adversaries from acting contrary to our national objectives or interests. Dissuasion provides the credibility that adversary activities can always be countered by our national power. Deterrence is the credible threat and/or use of force in response to hostile adversary actions. The CAF's contribution to full spectrum deterrence spans from our capability to deliver nuclear response options, to delivering precision tactical operations anywhere on the globe at a moment's notice, which helps maintain regional/global stability and security. Dissuasion and Deterrence effects are based on a foundation of global reach, forward presence, shaping and engagement activities combined with credible and ready capabilities with an eye toward all potential adversarial actors.



AC-130 gunship.

Decision Superiority is the ability to see first, understand first and act first. It provides the Nation and the joint force the ability to make sound, informed decisions faster than the enemy; thus placing us inside our adversary's decision loop and strategy. Decision-makers residing in joint headquarters, operations centers and battle management nodes execute command and control through information derived from the net-centric environment: intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; weather and readiness sources; and automated decision aids. This enables decision-makers to anticipate correctly and position our forces to react to adversary actions and degrade the enemy's freedom of action by seizing and maintaining the decision initiative. This ability to "know your enemy and know yourself" across the spectrum of conflict is increasingly difficult to gain and maintain in the information/knowledge infused security environment of today and tomorrow. Each link in the "effect" or "kill" chain relies on timely and accurate information to enable effective decisions. The faster commanders can visualize and understand the situation, the faster they can make decisions to counter the enemy's intent before they can take action. The effectiveness of Decision Superiority and the find, fix, track, target, engage and assess (F2T2EA) "effect" or "kill" chain is directly linked to the quality and quantity of information garnered .



Capt Steve Grogan prepares for a combat sortie as an E-8C JSTARS Senior Director.

The CAF is positioned to deliver agile combat airpower in order to remain the Nation's asymmetric advantage and its most ready and effective full spectrum deterrence and response force.



	Enduring US	AF Ends - Glob	al Vigiliance, Re	ach, Power		
Ends {	Dissuasion/ Deterrence	Decision Superiority	Freedom of Action	Persistent Pressure		
l r	AF C	CJO, Operational, a	and Integrating Conce	epts		
	Nuclear Deterrence Ops					
	Air Superiority					ary
	Command and Control				as	ibr
¥	Global Integrated ISR			Are		
Ways Annex C	Global Precision Attack			ity	Master Capability Library Forces and Capabilities	
	Personnel Recovery			loint Capability Areas		
	Space Superiority				ap 1	
	Cyberspace Superiority			t	aster Capability Li rces and Capabiliti	
	Special Operations			io r	Ma For	
	Rapid Global Mobility				AF	
	Building Partnerships					
Agile Combat Support						
eans	CAF Action and Investment Plan				DOT	MLPF Solut
	Near —		viid —	→ Far	-	

Figure 1. CAF Strategic Planning Construct.

Freedom of Action provides the joint force the ability to execute the options required to ensure our security, when, where and how we choose. It enables all instruments of national power; diplomatic, information, military, and economic. It predicates all joint operations across the spectrum of conflict and can never be taken for granted. The CAF ensures Freedom of Action for the joint force and the Nation through the control, protection, and exploitation of the air, space, and cyberspace domains. Traditionally, the CAF delivered Freedom of Action to the joint force by obtaining and maintaining air superiority. The modern era of conflict brought to the forefront the importance of space superiority, and now the information age requires cyberspace superiority to deliver mission assurance and, when needed, force application. Today, superiority in one of these domains cannot be assured without obtaining it in the other two, thus the CAF must obtain cross-domain superiority to continue to ensure Freedom of Action to the Nation.



An F-15E releases flares during a sortie over Afghanistan.

Persistent Pressure provides the joint force pressure in the form of multidimensional, distributed, coordinated, lethal or non-lethal effects on an adversary; locking down areas of interest; and denying enemy freedom of action. It seizes the initiative and denies adversary objectives, ultimately defeating their strategy by demanding decisions or actions counter to their plans more rapidly than their capability to adapt and overcome. The CAF brings to the Nation the ability to directly or indirectly attack an adversary's strategy and centers of gravity across the full breadth and depth of a conflict. The changing strategic environment and potential adversaries have focused the evolution of strategic attack through the integration of air, space, and cyberspace capabilities to hold an adversary's strategy in "check" or place it in "checkmate" if required.



EOD members set up an unexploded ordinance detonation site.

CAF Ways

The CAF Ways are the operational concepts and CFMPs that outline how the AF and thus the CAF fights. Together they identify the forces and capabilities to meet current and future joint force requirements. Air Force Operating Concepts (AFOpsC) are being aligned to clearly support and integrate into Joint Operating Concepts and will articulate how Air Force core functions are integrated to contribute to the joint fight. Each individual CFMP identifies the vision; priorities; the path to deliver the core function across the near, mid and far timeframes; and the capabilities the AF must invest in to deliver the function. Annex C of this plan contains the CFMPs for Nuclear Deterrence Operations, Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Global Integrated ISR, Command and Control, and Personnel Recovery as cross-linked and integrated with CFMPs being developed by other CAF members, e.g., AFSOC and AFSPC.



A B-52H Stratofortress drops a load of M-117 750-pound bombs.



HH-60 flies through the Hindu Kush mountains.

CAF Means

CAF Means are our forces, systems, and capabilities. Air Force Component HQs integrate CAF Means and deliver our Ways to Combatant Commanders. Our capabilities are developed by CAF MAJCOMs and ultimately produce resources – personnel, forces, materiel and other physical assets. Each of the CAF Means represents either a primary or enabling capability required to deliver an Air Force core function to the joint force. CAF capabilities are cross-functional by nature and do not reside solely within a single core function. Therefore, the force structure, capacity and investment plan are presented in an integrated fashion in Annex D of this plan.



A Minotaur I launches from Wallops Island.

(*A* modern, autonomous, and thoroughly trained Air Force in being at all times will not alone be sufficient, but without it there can be no national security." General H.H. "Hap" Arnold, USAAF



B-52s demonstrate global reach, global power.

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

CAF strategic planning reflects risk through the following categories: operational, future challenges, force management and institutional. Operational risks are those associated with the current force executing assigned missions successfully within acceptable human, material, financial, and strategic costs. Future challenges risks are those associated with the CAF's capacity to execute successfully against an array of prospective future challenges. Force management risks are those associated with managing CAF forces. Institutional risks are those associated with the capacity of command, management and business practices - those risks inherent in our processes, procedures and organizational structures.

For a strategy to be successful it needs to be pragmatic, especially in the near- and mid-terms, carefully delineating risks and constraints, identifying mitigations and taking action to ensure success. Since constraints are the driving factor in any consideration of risk, one of the surest mitigations in this area is a prioritization of effort to most effectively use available time and resources. Such prioritization inherently accepts risk in less critical parts of the strategy. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve the desired effects while minimizing negative consequences.

Constraints and risks are considered, detailed and mitigated at all levels of strategic planning. The CAF strategic plan annexes will each delineate constraints and risks as appropriate to their level of planning and detail, providing and implementing mitigations as appropriate. The matrix in Figure 2 is an example of risks and mitigations to executing this strategy and delivering CAF Ends to the Nation and is not intended to be exhaustive in nature.

CAF Strategic Plan Risk/Mitigation Matrix (Notional)

RISKS	MITIGATIONS
 Operational Capacity (personnel and systems): sustained combatant commander requirements limiting pursuit of expanded operations or aims Space and cyberspace are contested domains 	 Prioritize current combatant commander requirements over possible future requirements Pursue mission assurance capabilities across all domains
Future Challenges Increase reliance on space and cyberspace capabilities 	 Aggressively pursue advanced technical and operational counters to emerging threats Leverage civil, commercial and international partnerships
 Force Management Technological: some envisioned capabilities or effects may continue to be beyond our technical ability to realize 	 Aggressively pursue advanced technical solutions to stay at the leading edge of technological innovation
 Institutional Failure to develop adequate command, management and business practices 	 Develop adequate command, management and business practices

Figure 2. CAF Strategic Plan Risk/Mitigation Matrix.

Strategic Approach

The development of the CAF strategic appreciation identified the expanding problem set faced by the CAF in both the current and future operational environment and framed this strategic approach. The premise used to develop this approach was a clear understanding that we are in a war we can't afford to lose and yet we must be prepared and capable to meet the future security challenges our Nation will face. Therefore, our approach is built using two cornerstones: Winning Current Fight and Deterring/Winning Any Future Conflict. It is structured to generate operational effectiveness through warfighter integration. This approach will enable the development of agile combat airpower by closing the seams between sensors, shooters, and decision makers. This will generate increased combat airpower through shared awareness, increased speed of command, and higher tempo of operations with greater lethality and survivability. It acknowledges force structure guidance, but caveats this force must be fully capable and sustained at high readiness levels.

It examines strategic choices using tenets comprised of core functions, capability mix and force structure, readiness/sustainment, and organizational constructs.

The implications, risks and consequences of this approach must be examined through rigorous analysis and wargaming before a definitive path is chosen. DOTMLPF mitigation actions will be developed to address identified implications and risks. A clear action plan will be developed to address and decrease those risks identified as high.

Let there be no doubt, America's Air Force is "All In"-ready to contribute in any way necessary to win today's fight--even as we prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. For the ways and means with which we make our contributions are changing and will no doubt continue to do so. But our enduring contributions to National defense have achieved unprecedented success in several ways. Consider that no U.S. ground forces have been killed by an enemy aircraft attack in over 50 years. General Norton Schwartz, Air Force Chief of Staff

his strategic approach understands and acknowledges that our current and foreseeable fiscal constraints require strategic choices concerning core functions, capability mix/force structure; and organizational constructs. Due to significant fiscal restraints, we cannot do everything we need to do or believe we should do. We must prioritize our choices. National security and operational warfighting requirements, not programmatic actions, should drive these strategic choices. We need a clear path forward based on applying sound military judgment to the findings in our strategic appreciation process in order to meet the defense imperatives our Nation and joint, allied and coalition partners expect and require for success. As the world's premier Combat Air Force, we are at a crossroad where tough choices must be made - we need clarity in our choices and a clear understanding of our desired endstate.



An F-35 banks over the Eglin AFB flightline.

Our strategic approach is not based on a clean distinction between the current view of irregular warfare and major combat operations. Instead it is based on understanding conflicts occur between adaptive adversaries who employ strategies to achieve objectives based on their own strengths, vulnerabilities, capabilities, and beliefs balanced against the opponent's. Future conflicts will almost certainly be hybrid affairs containing elements of what we now call low/high-end capabilities and irregular/ regular combat operations. This critical assumption plays a significant role in the priorities and actions outlined in the CAF Strategic Plan and its associated annexes.

The long term role CAF forces will play in the successful resolution of the current conflicts is another key assumption playing into this strategic approach. CAF combat power, enablers and key combat support capabilities will be engaged in a protracted manner for the next ten to fifteen years. While this assumption might appear pessimistic to some and optimistic to others it is based on the level of current support provided, the development of host-nation capabilities and the predicted development of their own indigenous capabilities.



An RC-135U Combat Sent flies a training mission.

The most likely and most dangerous future environments outlined in the Strategic Environment section of this plan and amplified in Annex B provide the foundation for our third major assumption. The CAF must be organized, trained and equipped to contribute as tasked to successfully prevent or resolve the most dangerous future environment without impacting its capabilities and capacities to respond to COCOM taskings in the most likely future environment. Our Airmen and capabilities need to be flexible across a wide range of military operations.



A1C Derrick Gregg removes a hydraulic test line from a B1-B Bomber.

The fourth and final major assumption framing our approach is the impact the fiscally constrained portion of the operating environment will have on the CAF's capabilities and structure. It is assumed our Total Obligation Authority (TOA) will remain relatively constant with a far greater portion being devoted to non-discretionary personnel costs versus capability modernization/recapitalization, sustainment, and readiness issues.

Core Functions

The first tenet of our strategic approach centers on CAF core functions and prioritizes our actions to ensure they are developed to meet the challenges of the operating environment. The importance and prioritization of the core functions will change over time. The core functions are prioritized based on the imperatives the joint force, allies and potential coalition partners expect the AF to deliver. The AF provides Strategic Deterrence, preventing war or winning the Nation's wars if/when deterrence fails. The pillars of Strategic Deterrence are: Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Nuclear Deterrence, and Rapid Global Mobility. These are enabled by Command and Control, Global Integrated ISR (GIISR), and Space Superiority with mission assurance generated through Cyberspace Superiority and all are supported by a solid foundation of Agile Combat Support. We clearly recognize the importance of Special Operations and believe it is imperative to fully integrate the Special Operations core function with the ACC-led core function pillars of Strategic Deterrence. Personnel Recovery is part of our pillars but is not necessarily on par with the previously mentioned core functions. Building Partnerships is an integral subset of each pillar or enabling function. While this approach realizes the importance of Cyberspace Superiority now and more importantly as its capabilities are fully realized in the future, the CAF will focus its efforts in cyberspace



MSgt Michael Winans preflights an E-8C JSTARS.

on defending the Air Force portion of the Global Information Grid, providing mission assurance and force application, and delivering synchronized cyberspace command and control. As we move through the mid- and far-timeframes of our strategy we see three core functions growing in importance with Space Superiority becoming a foundational pillar as potential adversaries vie for control of the ultimate high ground. The importance of GIISR and Cyberspace Superiority will only increase in the antiaccess and domain degraded environment of the future.

The core functions are developed in this approach using an operational warfighting construct. Capabilities do not reside primarily in one or another function. It is the integration of cross-cutting capabilities inside each core function that allows the CAF to deliver the core functions to the joint force. Inside each core function, priorities, and objectives lay out a clear path based on the developed strategic appreciation to ensure we can build upon the cornerstones of winning the current fight and deterring/winning any future conflict.



The X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle.

Capability Mix/Force Structure: The capability mix and resulting CAF force structure are based on the requirement to win the current fight, and the hybrid and potential peer fight of tomorrow. The choices outlined in this strategy understand the requirements of the current fight, but balances the shift toward irregular capabilities with the requirements needed to operate in the future operational environment. Our Airmen, capabilities and force structure must have the agility to handle the gamut of situations and threats. Innovative operational concepts combined with employment of current, new or emerging capabilities will be used to meet currently identified requirements such as increased ISR combat air patrols (CAPs) – manned and unmanned.



An MQ-9 Reaper awaits the next sortie at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Readiness/Sustainment: To win the current fight, to deter, and if required, to win any future conflict requires a credible, ready force. To avoid the opposite, a hollow force, the CAF will trade capacity for critical capabilities and place increased emphasis on readiness and sustainment.



Airmen from the 44th Maintenance Unit inspect an F-15C.

Organizational Construct: Capability Mix/Force Structure adjustments either from growth of emerging capabilities/ requirements, or divestment of forces/capabilities based on fiscal constraints, require the CAF to examine and determine the organizational construct required to meet the demands of the current and future operational environment. This will include a streamlining, reduction, and downsizing of headquarters; determinations of Active/Air Reserve Component mix with proportional participation across all core functions; and a balance between forward and rotational presence. Ideally, a clear understanding of the desired organizational construct would precede any adjustments; however this will not be the case. Therefore, this approach acknowledges the requirement and establishes objectives and tasks to develop a clear path forward.

WINNING CURRENT FIGHT

This cornerstone guides CAF efforts, from the direct or enabling contributions of our component headquarters and deployed/engaged forces, to the Investment MAJCOMs, Numbered Air Forces, and Wings executing their organize, train and equip functions. It represents a focusing of our efforts to ensure the CAF is doing everything it can do to ensure success in the current fight.

With the proliferation of "high-technology" capabilities and the adaptive nature of our potential adversaries, future conflicts based on irregular or insurgency models will likely consist of hybrid threats. In this context, winning the current fight and/or any potential future IW conflict requires securing and stabilizing the affected nation. This gives other elements of national power time to strengthen the affected nation. This is important because irregular conflicts are characterized as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations.



National Guard Bureau Chief, Gen McKinley, visiting the Balkans

The CAF's ability to operate in the air, space, and cyberspace domains provides our fighting forces with a highly-asymmetric advantage over IW adversaries. It enables a joint force commander to reach the depth and breadth of the operational environment. Although a successful IW campaign typically requires a large ground presence, ground forces may be limited based on numbers deployed, terrain, mobility, etc. Despite the potential limited reach of ground forces in a given scenario, airpower can apply continuous pressure to an adversary and deny sanctuary while reassuring the population to some degree. Thus, the CAF will organize, train, and equip its forces to not only support ground maneuver elements, but also to develop the agility required to shape the conflict when ground maneuver elements are not present.



Angel Thunder 2010.

In direct support of ground maneuver elements, the CAF will provide armed reconnaissance (over-watch), close air support (CAS), electronic attack (EA), ISR, PNT, net-centric information, global communications, weather forecasting, and mobility to both supply and transport ground forces. In areas where ground forces are limited in their influence, airpower can disrupt sanctuaries (both inside and outside of the host nation as applicable), provide communication, infrastructure, and border security to ensure there is no place for the adversary to rest and reconstitute.



In homeland defense role: An F-15C flies over NASA's Cape Canaveral.

To win the current fight the CAF will leverage space, cyberspace, unmanned systems, and existing IW friendly CAF platforms like the A-10, with a small capability to train partners in Light Armed Attack and Reconnaissance aircraft. The CAF will ensure new fielded capabilities are agile enough to swing from a permissive IW environment to a more contested hybrid environment or a denied anti-access environment. CAF will develop low collateral damage weapons and an ability to hit high-speed moving targets in all environments. The CAF will further develop ISR, including cyber capabilities, to find, fix, and track challenging targets in urban environments, as well as an increased ability to target humans. CAF will field electronic warfare capabilities to ensure freedom of maneuver, as well as to deny the enemy's use of the electromagnetic spectrum. The CAF will develop Airmen who have the ability to prosecute an effective influence campaign. The CAF will develop the means in both systems, organizational constructs, and agreed upon command relationships to control joint, combined, and coalition partnered airpower operations. This includes a robust deployable and tailorable Theater Air Control System (TACS) to integrate air and land schemes of maneuver.

The CAF's efforts with respect to irregular warfare will be focused on organizational, training, and educational changes. The CAF will institutionalize IW to ensure we do not forget current lessons or those of the past. Our strategy is focused on winning the IW fight today, as well as the hybrid fights of tomorrow.



An F-16 Aggressor flies over the Nevada Test and Training Range.

Winning the current fight entails defending the homeland. To defend the homeland the CAF will train and equip to defend against symmetric and asymmetric air, space, cyberspace, and maritime threats. The CAF must be capable of finding, fixing, tracking, targeting, engaging, and assessing low-altitude threats as well as threats from the sea to include its portion of cyberspace security and future space threats. The CAF will leverage capabilities developed and fielded to defeat a peer competitor to defend the homeland as required.

DETERRING/WINNING ANY FUTURE CONFLICT

Preventing conflict is the best way to ensure our Nation's security and represents a key element to this strategic approach. Credible combat capability backed by persistent engagement and a thorough knowledge of the operating environment are critical to both dissuading international actors from becoming adversaries as well as deterring adversaries from taking action contrary to U.S. national interests. The CAF's credibility to dissuade and deter hinges on the threat of force – holding adversary capabilities and leaders at risk anywhere, anytime – and the capabilities and trained forces to back-up the threat of force, if required. It is not just our nuclear capabilities that provide this ability to deter; it is the balance of capabilities which can be used across the spectrum of conflict that impacts the calculus of potential adversaries. The expansion of our ability to deliver dissuasion and deterrence across the spectrum of conflict and against the myriad of international actors is crucial to our Nation's security in the future. Ultimately, the CAF contributes to the prevention of conflict or war by shaping the strategic choices of neutrals, allies, rivals, and adversaries through its presence and credibility as the world's Dominant Combat Air Force.



An F-22 flies over Kadena AB.



An EC-130J Commando Solo.

Rapid, persistent strike operations must be able to influence, manipulate, or if need be, dismantle an opponent's ability to act, either physically or psychologically. The character of potential adversaries, compression of the decision cycle and blurring of the traditional levels of conflict make it imperative for the CAF to update and expand its ability to attack the strategy and power of potential adversaries. Persistent capabilities are required, particularly in space and cyberspace, providing Global Vigilance while enabling the decision cycle of our Nation's leaders. This is as important during times of peace as it is during actual combat conditions.



Capt Candice Sperry, EC-130 EWO.

To ensure it can deter or win any future conflict, the CAF will focus its effort to improve its ability to operate in anti-access, area-denied, and domain degraded environments including space and cyberspace. It must effectively command and control joint counterair operations, and provide strategic deterrence backed up by credible capability. This focus includes the right mixture and balance of legacy versus emerging capabilities with emphasis on anti-access, area-denied, and domain degraded environments and C2 of counterair.



A CV-22 and MH-53.

The CAF must ensure nuclear operations provide the credible and effective deterrence the Nation and the world has come to rely on. This will require a focused effort to strengthen our nuclear enterprise with critical command and control, surety, and effectiveness enhancements to our nuclear deterrent forces.

The CAF strategic plan produces a mixture of capabilities for Global Precision Attack. Long Range Persistent Strike capabilities require a system of systems approach developed as manned, unmanned, or optionally manned with penetrating, ISR, EA, and stand-off capabilities, both nuclear and conventional across all operational domains. The CAF will pursue the appropriate balance of direct

attack versus stand-off munitions cued by effective ISR to prosecute challenging target sets. The CAF will balance, fix, and prioritize its kill chains to ensure it remains capable to both deter and defeat future peer competitors. The CAF must be capable of finding, fixing, tracking, targeting, engaging, and assessing advanced mobile land-based and maritime surface-to-air missiles. We will focus our efforts on finding and engaging ballistic missiles and land-based cruise missiles before they launch, while maintaining the ability to C2 joint capabilities to actively defend against them. The next generation of air superiority munitions must be delivered on time to fix shortfalls in both the air-to-air and suppression of enemy air defense missions. The CAF depends on building partnerships with key allies and other partners to ensure access to the theaters where we expect conflict. The CAF will maintain and further expand our ability to build partnerships across the portfolio of capabilities resident in the core functions.



Two F-22s and B-2 deployed to Guam.

CONCLUSION

Securing the High Ground provides the strategic approach for the CAF to achieve its vision for the 21st century and accomplish its mission. The future operating environment will challenge and stress our approach, but well-informed strategic choices will position the CAF to provide the agile combat airpower required to successfully resolve any combination of conflicts that might confront our Nation. Specifically, the CAF approach is to posture itself to handle the most dangerous environment included in our strategic appreciation process. Our focus is to win the current fight while ensuring we deter, and if required, fight and win any potential future conflict. This will ensure the CAF delivers the strategic deterrence our Nation, allies and potential coalition partners have come to expect. We identified the tough strategic choices the CAF must make to remain part of the world's premier Air Force.

To simultaneously win today's war while preparing for tomorrow's conflict within resource limits, we will have to accept risk in specific capabilities. Our strategic choices are balanced through an examination of the core functions, capability mix/force structure, readiness/sustainment, and organizational constructs.



Unmanned aircraft crews strive to support warfighters.

We must mitigate risk that might sacrifice our Nation's military superiority in air, space, and cyberspace. Airpower has been a critical constant in every conflict since our inception as a service in 1947, and contributions during OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM are no less remarkable. Thousands of lives have been saved solely because of our capability to deliver Global Vigilance and Global Power. Additionally, space and cyberspace is rapidly becoming more critical, and we must take action now to protect and, as required, control space and guarantee delivery of capabilities from and through both space and cyberspace to ensure success for our Airmen.



Airmen are the foundation of the Combat Air Force. Their agility across a wide range of military operations will generate success for this strategy. Their dedication, sacrifice, and service stand shoulder to shoulder with the proud traditions and legacy of the pioneers of military aviation. As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, we must continue to identify and nurture our upcoming leaders who will, with the audacity of Brigadier General "Billy" Mitchell, the statesmanship of General Henry "Hap" Arnold, and the vision of General Bernard Schriever, carry the CAF into the future. Securing the High Ground lavs out four CAF priorities to focus our efforts. Through these priorities, we will accomplish our mission to Fly, Fight and Win; integrating capabilities across air, space, and cyberspace to deliver precise coercive effects in defense of our Nation and its global interests.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A – CAF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (CSPP).

It establishes a general outline and the proposed content of each annex used to implement the CSP mission, vision, and AF priorities. It serves as a common process frame of reference among the CAF MAJCOMs and will be updated as required. ACC is OPR and will coordinate an updated draft during coordination of the CSP.



Lt Col James Kromberg prepares to fly the F-35.

ANNEX B – THREAT ASSESSMENT AND COMMANDERS' ESTIMATE.

Within the context of the CSP, Annex B is produced in sections to provide CAF strategic guidance. Section 1 is a summary of guidance from National, Defense, Joint, and Air Force-level strategies. Section 2 is a summary of the future operational environment. This summary is derived from numerous sources, including the Joint Operating Environment, Global Trends 2025, the National Intelligence Estimate, and National Defense Strategy. It identifies emerging trends and implications for future military operations. Section 3 is the future threat assessment, compiled by ACC/A2X from multiple sources. Annex B concludes with Section 4, the commanders' estimate, divided into a concise summary of the CAF strategy for organizing, training, and equipping our forces and providing the capability and capacity required to meet our Nation's military strategy. ACC is overall OPR for Annex B, but CAF MAJCOMs may share writing responsibilities.



TSgt Steve Cisneros inserts a protective plug into a C-130.

ANNEX C - CORE FUNCTIONS.

The Core Function Master Plans (CFMPs) describe how the AF will operate and deliver these twelve functions in the near-, mid-, and far-timeframes. They will be linked to Air Force Concepts of Operations (AF CONOPS) and joint and service doctrine. Each CFMP identifies challenges, concepts, forces, capabilities, risks, and goals in the DOTMLPF areas. As OPR for Annex C, ACC is responsible for developing the product format and establishing milestones, as well as authoring the CFMPs of Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Global Integrated ISR, Command and Control, and Personnel Recovery. AFGSC is the lead for the Nuclear Deterrence Operations CFMP development.

ANNEX D – CAF ACTION AND INVESTMENT PLANS – INVESTMENT MAJCOMS.

The capability investment plans produced by the MAJCOMs reflect the operational planning for force structure, capabilities and priorities. They include Investment MAJCOM plans under various names such as:

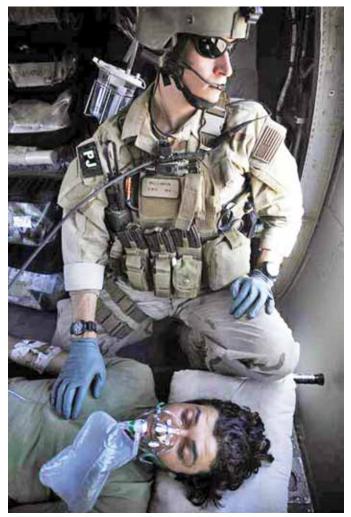
- ACC Action and Investment Plan, which includes the focus areas "Unmanned Aircraft Systems: The Way Ahead to 2020 and Beyond" and "Fifth Generation and Beyond: Readiness, Training and Sustainment"
- AFSOC Master Plan, which includes investment prioritization decisions from the USSOCOM Joint Mission Analysis (JMA) process
- AFSPC Master Plan, which links the AFSPC/CC's intent and stated vision to anoptimized force structure and investment strategy

The process for developing each MAJCOM capability investment plan involves conducting or leveraging functional area, functional needs,

and functional solutions analyses. Development of Annex D is timed to provide guidance to the programming process. The investment MAJCOMs are OPRs for their respective products.

ANNEX E - FORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Annex E, Section 1 describes evolving operational and environmental factors shaping CAF Airmen force development requirements. It identifies key attributes and institutional competencies required by CAF Airmen to adjust to those factors while accomplishing the CAF mission. It details a formal, strategically aligned, ACC force development governance structure overseeing a dynamic portfolio of initiatives supporting officer, enlisted and civilian force development goals and objectives. Section 2 establishes the detailed methodology to determine manpower requirements based on future force structures. Section 3 forecasts manpower requirements for future force options from Annex D. ACC is OPR for Annex E and will develop the annex format, scope, and milestones. Each CAF MAJCOM may develop its own input to the Annex E sections.



An Afghan medical patient receives treatment.



Fire Fighters train at Offutt AFB.

ANNEX F - TOTAL FORCE INTEGRATION (TFI).

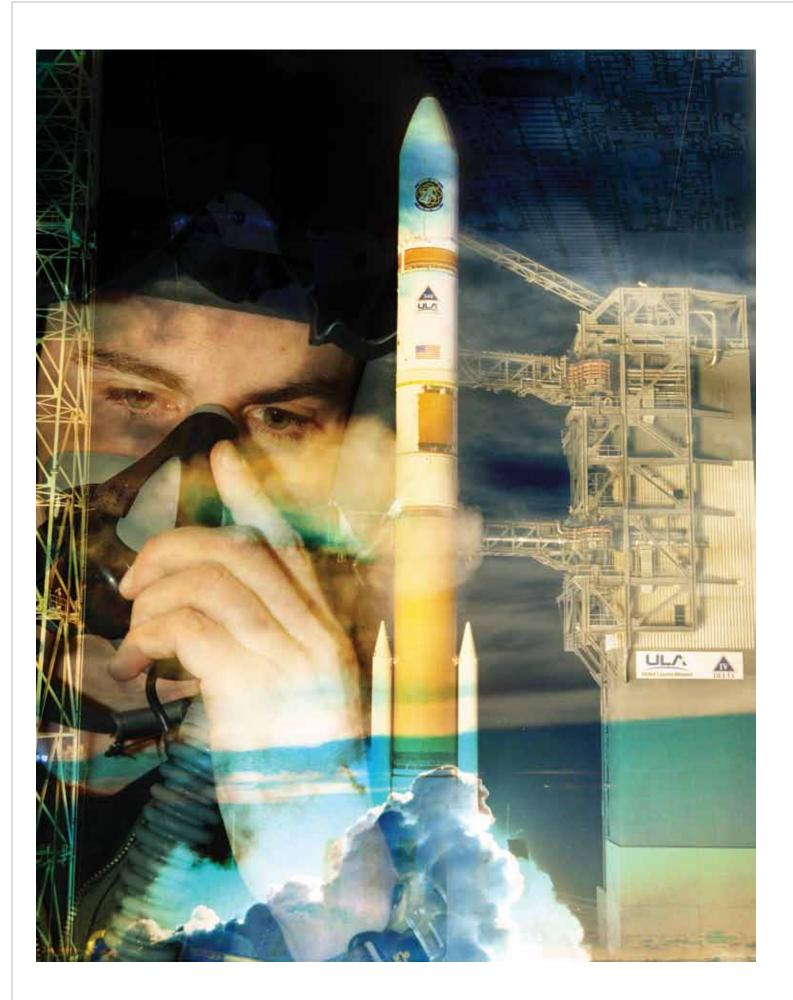
Annex F describes the strategic vision and milestones for integrating the Regular Air Force and the ARC to provide the force most capable of meeting CAF near-, mid-, and far-term requirements. The TFI construct focuses on sufficient availability of assets in support of contingency operations and robust capability for major combat operations. TFI encompasses functional integration down to the lowest level to capitalize on the strengths of each component to increase efficiencies and combat effectiveness. CAF strategic principles for TFI are balance, agility, and readiness.

- Balance: Effective mix of Active and Reserve Forces to succeed across the current and future spectrum of military operations
- Agility: Appropriate mix of Active and Reserve Personnel throughout the CAF
- Readiness: Leverage component strengths to increase readiness of CAF units

ACC is OPR for Annex F, but each investment MAJCOM, along with the ANG and AFRC, contributes to the total force plan to be incorporated into this annex.

ANNEX G – WARFIGHTER INTEGRATION.

Annex G describes CAF vision and plan for improved warfighter integration and the enabling network concepts, capabilities and constraints. It provides a single source for CAF warfighter integration, net-centric planning and programming guidance. ACC is OPR for Annex G, but AFSPC and AFSOC are essential contributors to this annex.





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