



## Air Force senior leaders take up key decisions

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10/7/2008 - **WASHINGTON** -- The nuclear enterprise, cyber organization, end strength, force shaping, and command and control of Air Force operations were just some of the topics discussed when Air Force senior leaders met at CORONA on Oct. 1-3 at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley set the tone stating, "Over the past two days we addressed several issues, making decisions on key Air Force missions necessary to move our Air Force in the right direction."

The Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Norton Schwartz, followed with comments on the importance of the conference saying, "CORONA is a forum for decision. The teamwork manifested in this room will allow us to accomplish what our Air Force needs done."

As a follow-up to the recent nuclear summit, the briefings and decisions at CORONA were dominated by discussions on the nuclear enterprise. Discussions included options to reconfigure the command structure for nuclear forces, roles and responsibilities of the Nuclear Weapons Center, the required skills and force development for personnel conducting the nuclear mission, and stand-up of the new nuclear-focused staff element organization within Air Force headquarters.

The leadership also decided to establish a nuclear focused major command to concentrate Air Force support for the nuclear and deterrence missions.

"We will announce decisions soon because they are crucial steps toward attaining excellence in our nuclear enterprise and revitalization of the nuclear culture across the Air Force," said Mr. Donley.

Initial planning will be integrated into the Air Force Nuclear Roadmap, which will be unveiled in a few weeks.

In addition, the senior leaders discussed the Air Force active duty end strength ceiling, now to be 330,000 personnel, and addressed which missions and functional specialties should obtain additional allocations based on emerging missions as well as critically-manned career fields.

"Force shaping across the Air Force is hard work. There are many factors that need to be considered as we determine where manpower billets will be placed...everything from new missions that are directly contributing everyday to joint operations to shortfalls in specific functional areas," said General Schwartz.

"The leadership will work to close this issue for this budget cycle in the coming weeks."

A key component of the Air Force's contribution to the current Global War on Terrorism is the execution of command and control of air assets supporting theater operations.

Leaders initiated discussions on how the service can better fulfill the responsibilities to organize, train, and equip command and control capabilities for the Joint Force Commander, as well as how the Air Force can best identify and overcome potential shortfalls in our capabilities.

"How we prioritize and utilize our command and control capabilities in support of joint force operations are key to the overall success of every mission," said General Schwartz.

Also discussed was how the Air Force can improve support to Joint Force Commanders. One decision made is to assign a senior Air Force officer to appropriate JFCs with command authority to direct air support. The leadership also decided to strengthen our air to ground integration by increasing the number and training of the Airmen supporting tactical air control systems and accepting offers from other services to integrate their personnel into our command and control units.

Leadership also decided to establish a Numbered Air Force for cyber operations within Air Force Space Command

and discussed how the Air Force will continue to develop capabilities in this new domain and train personnel to execute this new mission.

"The conduct of cyber operations is a complex issue, as DoD and other interagency partners have substantial equity in the cyber arena," said Mr. Donley. "We will continue to do our part to increase Air Force cyber capabilities and institutionalize our cyber mission."

Locations for the new nuclear command and cyber NAF were not addressed and require further deliberation.

Other key AF issues discussed include an update on the status of joint basing initiatives, the development of a common Logistics Standardization Evaluation Program, and review of the concept of integrating the networks used to repair the Air Force's weapon systems.

"We came together to discuss key issues, chart a way ahead and move forward with sound decisions," said General Schwartz. "Our goal is a more stable Air Force, focused on our core missions, as a key member of the joint team."

"What Airmen do every day across the Air Force is not easy work. What our leadership team did over the last couple days at CORONA was not easy work," said Mr. Donley. "But we all know how to rise to the challenge and the Air Force is better because of everyone's efforts at making key decisions."