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## The Way Ahead

Many of you have asked me about the future of our Air Force, so I want to take this opportunity to provide you with my vision for the way ahead. We are at an important juncture after nearly 20 years of constant combat in the Middle East and Asia; an era that has changed the face of modern warfare and reshaped us. Our Airmen are responding to the Nation's call with agility, innovation, and expeditionary presence--today nearly 40,000 American Airmen are deployed to 263 locations across the globe. We've also demonstrated that modern warfighting isn't just about how many are "over there." Our deployed-in-place Airmen are indispensable to the day-to-day defense of our Nation, whether they are tracking and dispatching bad actors at intercontinental range, maintaining constant vigilance from space, sustaining credible strategic deterrence, protecting networks, or patrolling the skies over the homeland.

Even so, we are not the Air Force our leaders envisioned at the end of the Cold War. Since I became your Chief we have had to make some tough decisions, primarily focused on three challenges: restoring credibility to our nuclear enterprise, enhancing our contribution to today's fight, and recapturing acquisition excellence. As demanding as we will continue to be in those areas, I am pleased with the progress we've made to date; but also believe we must seize this moment and look ahead. Let me be very clear: I see our Air Force rising, strong and capable--an Air Force delivering consistent, credible Global Vigilance, Global Reach and Global Power for America--in what is likely to be a very challenging future.

The Airman's distinctive focus on air, space and cyber power, and the asymmetric advantage the Air Force provides, continues to be indispensable to this Nation. America relies on us to gain and maintain control of the air and space, and increasingly cyberspace, wherever and whenever needed. Beyond that, our ability to exploit that control remains a cornerstone of this Nation's ability to shape, deter and, if necessary, fight and win - anywhere our interests and those of our allies and partners are at stake.

Even as we focus on winning today's war, we should also keep a watchful eye on the evolving 21st century security environment. We must take steps today that will allow future generations to meet--and shape--the challenges of tomorrow. That will not be easy. Budgets will get tighter and threats more compelling; yet we must constantly adapt in order to remain strong. Our distinctive brand of flexibility, expertise and creativity will prove indispensable in the future.

Securing the Nation, our allies and partners against nuclear attack remains a strategic imperative, but that challenge continues to take on new dimensions. Nuclear proliferation and the potential for nuclear terrorism is a constant danger that shapes how we will adapt to the future security environment. At the same time, we must continue to work with

allies, partners, and government agencies to dismantle al Qaeda and their affiliates. These types of adversaries will continue to adopt novel methods; increasingly using advanced systems, to offset the advantages offered by air and space power. We also cannot ignore how potential nation-state adversaries have evolved since the end of the Cold War. They are developing and proliferating counters to U.S. military power projection, including accurate weapons that could be used to attack our forward bases, forces, networks and logistics.

These trends, which have become much clearer in the past few years, will guide us as we make decisions about how our Air Force moves into the future. In the short term, we will continue to see greater demand for Air Force capabilities in relatively uncontested environments. In the future, however, we are more likely to encounter the global proliferation of precision weapons, coupled with an increasing requirement for long-range strike and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in areas guarded by increasingly capable, agile defenses. While our current plans mainly focus on near-term threats, we must work hard at developing and refining longer-term capabilities, mindful of the likelihood of more challenging budgetary constraints.

The Secretary and I identified five priorities to focus our efforts. In each case, we have accomplished some important things over the past 20 months, but we must turn our attention to the future. Using these priorities as a guide, I want to provide some direction about where we need to go as a Service.

### ***1. Continue to Strengthen the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise***

We have made significant progress in what we originally called *Reinvigorating our Nuclear Enterprise*. Although Secretary Donley and I agree the job is not yet finished, we revised this priority to read *Continue to Strengthen the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise*. We have already:

- Established Air Force Global Strike Command, a headquarters directing all our intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and nuclear-capable bomber forces.
- Established the Nuclear Oversight Board, chaired by the Secretary and me, to establish and monitor nuclear-related policies, standards, and performance.
- Established a Headquarters Air Force organization, A10, tasked with ensuring sustained institutional focus and integrating activities across the USAF nuclear enterprise.
- Consolidated nuclear sustainment activities in the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, and instituted positive inventory control for weapon system components, and 100 percent accountability of all nuclear weapons-related material.
- Enhanced nuclear unit readiness and nuclear surety through strong, positive leadership, high levels of command accountability, and more robust, standardized inspections.

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The Air Force has a long-term commitment to organize, train and equip a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear enterprise. As a bedrock of strategic deterrence and stability, it must be properly sustained and funded, and nuclear professionals need to be uncompromising in their pursuit of nuclear expertise and the highest standards of operational discipline. We will not fail in this mission and will continue to be trustworthy stewards of two legs of America's nuclear triad and critical elements of our forward-deployed extended

deterrant. I intend for Airmen to focus on the following areas:

- Implement applicable directives outlined in the Nuclear Posture Review and arms control treaties, and play an influential role in future nuclear policy debates.
- Advance the scientific, research and development, and human capital efforts necessary to field robust, sustainable nuclear missile and bomber forces well into the future.
- Prioritize and invest in the modernization and recapitalization of our nuclear forces.
- Craft a comprehensive deterrence and crisis stability vision that builds on the Nuclear Posture Review.

## ***2. Partner with the Joint and Coalition Team to Win Today's Fight***

The Air Force makes a unique, important contribution to today's fight. In addition to fulfilling traditional Air Force combat roles, Airmen perform admirably wherever and whenever required by carrying out medical evacuation, ordnance disposal, convoy security, and in many other vital roles. We:

- Delivered responsive, persistent ISR, increasing combat air patrols to 45 this year.
- Flew 105,000 close air support sorties since 2007, with historically fast response times.
- Deployed MC-12W Project Liberty aircraft to the theater in a record nine months.
- Since 2001, evacuated nearly 70,000 patients from the USCENTCOM AOR, dramatically improving the survival and recovery rates of wounded personnel.
- Doubled the size of our AFSOC Aviation Advisory corps, enhancing our ability to assess, train, advise, assist and integrate partner nation aviation capabilities.
- Selected 43 of our best officers for the elite Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands program.
- Commanded almost half of the 14 Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and provide 70 percent of the deployed contracting officers.
- Operated over 55 satellites providing continuous positioning, navigation, and timing; communications, weather, ISR, and warning to US and allied forces worldwide.
- Partnered with Australia to expand the Wideband Global Satellite Communications constellation, providing unprecedented levels of tactical command and control.
- Achieved initial operational capability in 24th Air Force for cyberspace support, defense, and force application, and designated them as the single commander for AFNETOPS.

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The Air Force will always be an integral part of Joint and Coalition operations. As we look ahead, we are likely to encounter more sophisticated hybrid adversaries and situations requiring enhanced integration across multiple domains. In irregular warfare and anti-access / area denial environments, the Air Force must continue to build partnerships with other air forces to bolster international cooperation, sustain powerful, global forces for stability, and ensure access to the global commons. I want Airmen to focus on the following areas:

- Enhance our training and operational flexibility for the command and control of air and space power, creating organizations and capabilities adaptable to any Combatant Commander or Joint Task Force.

- Strengthen the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) role as the Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) for Integrated Air and Ballistic Missile Defense.
- Improve our relationship with the Navy through the Air-Sea Battle concept, enhancing our integration and cooperation in countering increasingly advanced anti-access threats.
- Seek partnerships and base access agreements to mitigate anti-access challenges in key regions, and explore innovative means to project power when bases are threatened.
- Anticipate and plan for the emergence of more sophisticated, state-sponsored irregular adversaries, to include development of more tailored approaches to command and control that increase integration of the full range of Air Force capabilities with ground elements.
- Enhance our ability to train, advise, assist and integrate partner air forces, institutionalize Air Advisor training, and stand up an Air Advisor Academy.
- Develop and field the Light Attack/Armed Reconnaissance Aircraft (LAAR) and Light Mobility Aircraft (LiMA) to allow training with a broader array of aviation partners.
- Build stronger international air force cooperation, interoperability, and mutual support.

### ***3. Develop and Care for Airmen and their Families***

Airmen and their families make us a world-class organization and deserve world-class support. The Secretary and I designated July 2009 - July 2010 as the Year of the Air Force Family. Our intent is to find better ways to support, develop, house and educate our Air Force Family so all can be given every opportunity to attain their personal and professional goals even as the Air Force sustains a wartime tempo. To do this, we:

- Continued to expand our efforts to strengthen the resiliency of Airmen and their families before and after deployment.
- Instituted targeted professional military education curricula for officers to enhance nuclear, acquisition and cyber expertise.
- Delivered 5,000 new and renovated homes in 2009, awarded 27 housing privatization projects for 44 bases involving nearly 38,000 homes, and eliminated nearly 35,000 inadequate units.
- Added \$100M to improve dormitories and spent \$75M on fitness centers.

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Supporting the All Volunteer Force at war will present challenges. We are an expeditionary Air Force, and an Airman's deployment is also a family's deployment. Our Air Force must attract, recruit, train, educate, and retain Airmen capable of adapting to changing missions in a rapidly evolving security environment. To build this future force, I intend for Airmen to focus on the following areas:

- Strategy is about the future--in order to shape that future we must focus our educational institutions and personal learning in a way that encourages a high level of strategic thinking and debate about the Airman's role in the emerging global security environment.
- Consider the effect of the security environment on Total Force balance recognizing that the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are not only a strategic reserve

- but are also required for daily mission accomplishment.
- Ensure we modify and update our policies, programs, and systems to develop our Total Force Airmen through enhanced education, training and experience.
- Improve commander involvement in the care of Wounded Warriors, focusing on recovery, rehabilitation and re-integration.
- Add sufficient capacity to our child development centers to eliminate the child care space deficit by the end of FY12.
- Focus on: resiliency of our Airmen, exceptional family member support and community educational initiatives, and reduction in our suicide rate.

#### ***4. Modernize our Air and Space Inventories, Organizations, and Training***

An issue most pressing in my mind is the modernization and sustainment of our Air Force. Decades of sustained combat has placed significant strain on our aging weapon systems, and today's operational needs and strained budgets force us to make tough choices. We continue to seek the right balance between modernization and sustainment, and retirement and recapitalization. In particular, I want to address potential capability shortfalls and vulnerabilities. We made a good start as we:

- Released the KC-X Request for Proposal, and anticipate contract award later this year.
- Funded a common configuration for the F-22 fleet, revamped the F-35 program, and funded mission-sustaining upgrades to our bomber fleet.
- Completed C-17 procurement, operational testing of the C-5 Reliability Enhancement Re-engining Program (RERP), and retirement of 24 of the oldest C-130E aircraft.
- Accelerated the retirement of older fighter aircraft to make room for newer, more capable aircraft and additional weapons for remaining platforms.
- Launched the second and third Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) satellites and procured the Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF) satellite system.
- Assigned AFSPC as the lead MAJCOM for cyberspace operations.

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We opened the way for the future force, in part by retiring legacy aircraft and restructuring space programs to allow reinvestment in other pressing mission areas. But we need to go farther. To enhance our ability to conduct operations in opposed-network environments, we must improve our approach to electronic warfare. We have to acknowledge the challenges of long distance operations and the proliferation of sophisticated defenses, and advance our capability to conduct long-range penetrating strike and persistent ISR. The growing threat of precision ballistic and cruise missiles compels us to increase the resilience of our bases and logistics, and explore ways to reduce logistics demand. In the space and cyber domains, we need to continue to pursue space situational awareness and the space protection program to ensure access and attribution in that increasingly contested, congested, and competitive domain; and to continue actions that ensure security and freedom of action within the cyber domain. I want Airmen to act on the following:

- Advocate and develop the next generation of long-range penetrating strike concepts, platforms, weapons, and enabling systems.
- Develop persistent airborne ISR capabilities that can operate in contested

- environments.
- Develop concepts, technology and training methods for operating in tomorrow's opposed network and GPS-degraded environments, to include expansion of protected communications capabilities.
  - Bolster the resilience of our forward bases and logistics through selective hardening, dispersal, warning, and active defenses.
  - Substantially reduce fuel consumption through improved operational planning, alternative training concepts, and installation modernization and management.
  - Reestablish the Air Force as a leader in electronic warfare with increased R&D of equipment and investment in realistic EW training.
  - Institutionalize remotely-piloted aircraft (RPA) training and operations with the goal of complete institutional integration over the long haul.
  - Improve space situational awareness with Space-Based Surveillance and Space Fence, and improve our ability to react with a modernized Joint Space Operations Center.
  - Capitalize on improvements in directed energy by moving out of the lab with lethal and non-lethal, ultra-precise, low collateral damage systems.
  - Focus Title 10 wargames on testing alternative force structures, new technologies, and innovative operational concepts that stimulate Airmen to think about the future. We must also collaborate with counterpart Service wargames to find ways to increase combat power through cooperation and integration.

### ***5. Recapture Acquisition Excellence***

Improved acquisition performance begins with experienced professionals, using the right analytic tools and processes, all supported by transparent decision-making. Our focus on recapturing acquisition excellence begins with our Acquisition Improvement Plan (AIP). Ultimately, the health of the Air Force requires that we bring acquisition costs and timelines under much greater control and oversight. To do this, we:

- Hired more than 2,000 personnel into the acquisition workforce in 2009 and continued contractor-to-civilian conversions.
- Created 11 new program executive officer positions to reduce span of control and increase focus on program execution.
- Initiated an improved, independent source selection review process, completing 107 contract award reviews to ensure they are correct, defendable, and transparent.

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We made progress toward acquisition reform in the last two years, but we have a lot more work to do. We must take a long-term view to bolster our acquisition and technology workforce and improve oversight on critical programs. To do that, Airmen must act on the following initiatives:

- Build and maintain a competent Acquisition Corps with strong uniformed senior leader oversight and clear career development paths.
- Expand our acquisition workforce by some 7,000 positions in five years, focusing on program management, cost estimation, financial management, and systems engineering.
- Greatly improve transparency and accountability in program and financial management.

- Recapture a vision for aggressive science and technology development, the rapid transition of innovative technology into operational capabilities, and harnessing aerospace technology to meet broader national security needs.

## Conclusion

Some of the programs outlined above are already in progress, some require implementation, and all require leadership and fresh thinking. We cannot know what the future holds, so in order to realize my vision of a consistently powerful, capable Air Force, we will almost certainly need to pursue initiatives not yet fully imagined. I know Airmen will respond. After all, we are the stewards of a remarkable and vibrant history that began on the sands of Kitty Hawk and continues to be written in places like Afghanistan. Whether our contribution is in irregular warfare, humanitarian relief operations, engaging other air forces, aerial combat, strategic deterrence--or just getting the job done--we stand firm as a vital component of U.S. military power. America's Air Force entered the 21st century as the world's best air, space and cyber institution, and together we must expand on that legacy. I am proud to be your Chief and look forward to working with you as we build a firm foundation for the next generation of Airmen.

