



Air Force Reserve Senior Leader Conference

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Introduction

Thank you, Charlie, for inviting me to spend some time with you and other leaders of the Air Force Reserve; and, thank you for your steady leadership and faithful support. The men and women of the Reserve perform admirably on a daily basis, and are critical to the Air Force Total Force effort. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to share a few thoughts, and hope that your conference here is both stimulating and productive.

Our current and ongoing efforts to continue Total Force Integration are yielding meaningful results. We will strive for even greater achievements, and concentrate our efforts to settle recent associations of the Regular Air Force and Air Force Reserve to make these associations permanent, with our efforts resting upon an enduring foundation of mutual trust and respect. I am very appreciative of this close relationship, for it will be critical as we move forward together to address our remaining challenges. They are difficult—we've already done the easy stuff—but if we work together as a Total Force team, they are not insurmountable, and will eventually yield to even more efficient and integrated associations.

The 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.

To succeed, we must effectively operate across the entire spectrum of conflict—from the “high” to the “low” end, and in particular, across the considerable expanse of hybrid and irregular warfare. Different types of threats to our national interests will continue to emerge, and our warfighting



capabilities must develop to meet them. As a Total Force, we must be prepared not only to identify the evolving ways and means of warfare, but to determine how we will posture our overall capabilities to succeed.

The recently released Quadrennial Defense Review outlines the Defense Department's four most important priorities in our efforts "to defend and advance our national interests." Each of these "priority objectives"—prevailing in today's wars, preventing and deterring conflict, preparing to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies, and preserving and enhancing the all-volunteer force—has important strategic implications to the Total Force in general, and the Air Force Reserve in particular. Collectively, these objectives provide us with a useful strategic framework within which we can carefully consider emerging warfighting requirements, and shape the ways and means that are vital to the Joint team's success.

Priority Defense Objectives

To **prevail in today's wars**—particularly, with the responsible drawdown in Iraq toward increased operations in the austere terrain of Afghanistan—we must continue to provide the Joint team with Air Force-unique capabilities upon which they have come to rely. Enduring capabilities such as airlift and air refueling remain at the heart of our mobility capability, both strategic and intra-theater. Our global precision strike capabilities leverage the inherent range, flexibility, and lethality of airpower to hold any target at risk, virtually anywhere in the world. To ensure their continued viability, we will continue to work toward a "family of systems" that provides the necessary flexibility and agility. Essential trades on methods of employment—stand-off versus penetrating, and manned versus unmanned, just to name a few—remain to be finalized with our counterparts in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Finally, our enduring capability to provide the Joint team with unmatched battlespace awareness remains. The QDR specifically identifies the continued need for increased intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities from our remotely-piloted assets. To that end, we remain on track to surge nearly all of our Predator-class aircraft into theater, to achieve 50 combat air



patrols by the end of 2011, and posture ourselves for 65 by the end of 2013. Air Force Reservists have been crucial in this incredible expansion, and will continue to be as we further increase our capacity.

To **prevent and deter conflict**, we will continue to strive toward multirole systems and capabilities that can flex to fulfill different warfighting requirements across the spectrum of conflict. At the high end, the Air Force continues to provide two of our Nation's three arms of nuclear deterrence, with unwavering excellence, precision, and reliability.

And, across the continuum, we will continue to emphasize the Joint team's contribution to a whole-of-government approach—including diplomatic, economic, information, intelligence, law enforcement, military, and other elements—to engage with our international allies and partners. Among the several specific and mutually-supporting strategies toward this objective are underwriting diplomatic and development efforts to address root causes of radicalism, and not just the violent manifestations thereof; and, building partnerships and partner capacities. These strategies represent valuable opportunities to leverage existing resources in indirect ways, engage in diplomatic efforts, and fulfill our responsibilities to allies and friends around the globe.

This is crucial in a world in which interdependence is the *modus operandi*. We rely on our partners to help accomplish our objectives, and the international community benefits from the resources and capabilities of the United States. Building partner capacity is a more active approach, insofar as it emphasizes reliance upon the affected partner governments that have superior insight into and perspective of their regional and local socio-political, economic, and security concerns, and can address them more directly and efficiently than we can. This helps to prevent lower-intensity problems from festering into full-scale crises, which may require costly, sustained, and sometimes controversial intervention by the United States.

In these efforts, the capabilities, credentials, and experience that are derived from the civilian careers of Reservist Airmen can be leveraged in unique



and effective ways to assist our partners. Some of these areas—governance, education, agriculture, rule of law, health care, to name a few—are those in which the active military has relatively modest resident capability or capacity. With focused engagement from our Reservists, cooperation and collaboration with our partners can help to dissuade aggression—overt or otherwise—in a pre-hostility environment, and can aid the transformation of defense structures and governmental institutions that are more appropriate for 21st century challenges.

For example, the outreach of the 302nd Airlift Wing to share their unique expertise in aerial firefighting is an innovative, forward-leaning, and mission-focused approach that the Air Force Reserve brings to our collective portfolio of capabilities. Their recent efforts in training our friends in the Royal Thai Air Force on the Modular Airborne Firefighting System greatly developed our partner's capabilities. Moreover, it achieved a significant milestone as the first time that the Air Force Reserve dispatched a team to assist a foreign nation in developing its aerial firefighting techniques—a competence that will be central to saving lives and improving important perceptions of governance. This was a job tremendously well done, and a credit to the entire Air Force Reserve and Total Force team.

In **preparing to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies**, we again must achieve unprecedented levels of creativity and innovation to develop multi-role systems that can flex between various requirements, and be capable of multiple methods of employment. The challenge is balancing two competing demands: system complexity, which, while enabling multiple roles, requires more time and effort to field; and the need for responsiveness and agility to meet immediate, emerging needs. We must maximize our Total Force associations while minimizing waste and inefficiency. This is especially true in light of growing demands and flattening budgets.

To bring these future systems to fruition, we must continue the gains that we made in recapturing acquisition excellence, which underpins transparent



and responsive processes to research, develop, test, evaluate, and field these new systems. Only through this excellence can we deliver new capabilities, on time and with the utmost attention to sound fiscal stewardship.

This will not be easy, but we must be prepared, as a Total Force and as a Joint team, to respond with a thoughtfully developed balance of military ways and means that are integrated with all of our national instruments of power. This is essential to facing state and non-state actors that are employing a variety of methods to challenge us in the global commons, and in contested areas where we need to operate. Most likely, this will mean continued change, but I am impressed by the responsiveness of the Air Force Reserve in evolving to meet emerging needs and explore new mission areas—like cyber, for example. Reserve units have already begun to meet the challenge of assuring our mission in this critical area, and I look forward to more innovative approaches like this in the future.

The most important asset for a flexible and agile force is its people; so, to maximize the strength of our force posture, we must **preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force**. Almost a decade of persistent conflict and nearly two decades of demanding deployments are threatening the long-term viability of our force. This compels us to take substantial measures to mitigate the stresses on our service members and their families. Our designation of the Year of the Air Force Family is in direct recognition of the sacrifices that spouses, sons, daughters, and other family members must make when their loved ones are absent for extended periods. And, it rightly focuses our attention in critical areas of Airman and family support and professional development—to identify gaps and eliminate them.

As part of this effort, we need to recognize the special circumstances of our reservists as well, and address all elements of the “Reserve Triad.” In addition to caring for our Air Force families, we also need to attend to the other two elements—military and civilian employers—to preserve the long-term sustainability of the Reserve component. Frank discussions about expectations help to increase predictability and long-term planning, which is



invaluable in our Reservists' continuing to nurture and maintain their relationships with both their civilian and military employers.

Finally, we must continue our strong support for developing our Airmen through improved benefits such as the post-9/11 G.I. bill, and caring for all Airmen, but especially our wounded warriors, through unparalleled medical attention, both physical and psychological. These and other retention issues must be addressed to ensure our long-term viability and continued readiness.

Meeting the Challenges, and Embracing the Opportunities

All of this is because we remain duty-bound to protect our homeland, preferably from a substantial distance, at times and places of our choosing; but, we must also be prepared, should the fight be brought to our shores. The Air Force Reserve has been critical to this effort, providing not only support for civil authorities, but also combat capabilities across a wide variety of mission areas—air refueling; airlift; and air- and space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, just to name a few. The reserve component's balance between serving as a strategic reserve and as an operational force has been tipping toward the latter, so we must continually be mindful of this.

In the meantime, the indispensability of our Reserve partners cannot be overstated. As Secretary Gates has noted, "the National Guard and the Reserves are integral to the Total Force, and have assumed a greater operational role in today's force." Time and again, Reservists prove their high skill, reliability, and trustworthiness in providing integrated capabilities to protect our homeland and prevail in our Nation's overseas conflicts. Our Airmen—Regular and Reserve—are outside the wire and in the fight every day, performing vital medical support and evacuation, explosive ordnance disposal, Joint Terminal Air Control, and so much more.

Just ask the security forces and logistics readiness Airmen of the 445th Airlift Wing, who recently returned from deployments to Kirkuk and Ali Air Base in Iraq. There, they proudly and skillfully performed tower duties and kept watch over the city; patrolled every sector of the base; secured the gates; and trained the Iraqi army on convoys. Around the globe, Reservists are



critical to sustaining and expanding cooperative engagement with existing partners, as well as poised to develop budding partnerships with critical, at-risk nations.

And, what better, more recent example of humanitarian relief than the ongoing efforts in Haiti? Once again, American airpower has made, and continues to make, a substantial difference in the U.S. effort to assist the victims of the devastating January 25th earthquake. And, once again, it was largely an integrated, Total Force effort to deliver life-saving, life-sustaining supplies, involving 302nd Airlift Wing Reservists, active duty Airmen from the 52nd Airlift Squadron, and Minnesota Air National Guardsmen from the 133rd Airlift Wing. As we speak, our teammates continue to perform admirable—*remarkable*—feats on behalf of our Nation; and, they certainly make us proud.

Conclusion

As we continue to face modernization and recapitalization challenges, while simultaneously managing essentially zero-sum fiscal realities, I ask that we transcend narrower interests, appreciate our collective challenges, and continue to be innovative together, in the finest tradition of the active duty and Reserve partnership. We may have to make more difficult tradeoffs, for with little growth to our purchasing power, each dollar must go farther than ever before. However, if we bear the brunt of Total Force re-posturing together, then we stand to succeed across all of our core mission areas.

The American people have placed their most solemn trust in us to meet the current and future challenges to our security, so for our part, we cannot fail to make the grade. But, with all of the challenges that I have discussed, we have many opportunities to shape our own future—on our terms. This future will be underwritten by people who are determined to lead, and driven to inspire other hard-working, talented individuals in common cause. I am counting on you to be those leaders—to harness the individual brilliance of those who look to you for guidance, toward collective genius that will help us solve these most pressing issues. As we look to the future, we must be mindful



of a total, integrated approach, in which we all move forward together; else, we will face these pressing issues without the benefit of each other's strengths.

I understand that there will always be some degree of self-interest. This is the way of the world. But, while self-preservation is a valid instinct and an institutional imperative, it must be tempered by the greater need of the team, and applied selectively for the greater good.

It has been a distinct honor for me to have spent this time with you, and to serve our great Nation, shoulder to shoulder, with the great men and women of the Air Force Reserve. I thank you for your service, and sincerely wish you all the very best.