



Global Air Chiefs Conference
“Airpower Contributions to
Balancing Effectiveness with Efficiency”

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~20 min.
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Introduction

Thank you very much for that kind introduction. Ladies and gentlemen, friends, colleagues, and fellow airmen: it is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to address this extraordinarily distinguished audience. I thank my friend, General Aksay, for extending the invitation for me to participate. Sir, on behalf of the men and women of the United States Air Force, I express hearty congratulations and sincere esteem to you and your superb airmen, as you celebrate the Turkish Air Force’s auspicious 100th anniversary.

Ladies and gentlemen, it will take enormous professionalism, skill, commitment, and versatility—like what our Turkish Air Force colleagues display every day—to contend with the challenges that we all face, and which continue to grow in scope and complexity. It will also take teamwork between us and our partner air forces, because as a distressed global economy persists and converges with geopolitical uncertainty, we are faced with decreased defense purchasing power, even while we contend with surging operations, maintenance, and personnel costs, and increased operational requirements.

Ultimately, we are all left with fewer strategic options to address the many challenges of an uncertain future security environment. Because we know that our ability to purchase expensive material solutions in order to increase our capability is limited, we cannot merely “throw money at the problem,” as some in the media suggest is our habit. Instead, we must redouble our efforts to be more efficient in all of our operational and business practices.

Multiple Levels of Balance

But, the urgency to be efficient must be balanced with the imperative to be effective. As military professionals, we are called to act usually when the stakes are very high, and mission failure would be extremely detrimental, if not unacceptable.



Meeting the commitment to provide full-spectrum capability calls for maximum preparedness to ensure the maximum probability of success.

As airmen, we appreciate that airpower's inherent characteristics afford us numerous strategic options and enhance our operational ability to be both effective and efficient. In practice, this is an extremely difficult balance to achieve. But, as professionals who are charged with the art and science of leveraging airpower's unique characteristics, we must meet this challenge. When our nations respond to contingencies on a moment's notice, at opposite ends of the operational spectrum and on opposite sides of the globe, only airpower and its systems can be tailored and adapted to meet the need nearly instantaneously—for example, from providing emergency humanitarian aid in response to multiple concurrent disasters in Japan, to then joining our NATO allies and coalition partners in enforcing the United Nations-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya.

These are times when our ability as airmen to translate airpower's unique characteristics of speed, range, versatility, and responsiveness into timely, tailored, and precise effects can make the difference between mission success and significant disappointment or failure. As globalization continues to give rise to more numerous and shared interests around the world—and as technology further enables ever-more-rapid rates of change—only airpower's ability to traverse vast distances with unmatched speed and unparalleled versatility can provide truly timely and high-confidence national responses.

This ability is ever more needed in an increasingly vast and dynamic geostrategic environment. Creating these viable strategic options in a fiscally-constrained environment will not be easy, however. Developing practical strategies to balance effectiveness and efficiency requires a comprehensive evaluation of capabilities and capacities, both individually as independent air forces, and collectively as partner air forces and allies.

This process of balance also includes an evaluation of risk, which in itself is another level of balance—between the likelihood of particular threats, and the severity of consequences if they are left unaddressed and unabated—that challenges us. Once we estimate the odds of a particular circumstance, we then can begin to



determine what risks are involved, whether we are willing to accept them, and what the implications are to force structure, operational readiness, capabilities, and capacities.

However, the future security environment will call for an ability to meet the full scope of wide-ranging security commitments, even while we contend with ongoing resource limitations. As such, we may have to carefully consider reduced capacities while maintaining—perhaps increasing investment in—capabilities that we deem clearly essential. We then have to mitigate any risk that we accept, through strategies such as greater efficiency, enhanced utility and interoperability, and strengthened international partnerships with like-minded nations that share common interests.

Through collaboration, partner air forces can mutually expand broad-spectrum capabilities, and use the additive effects of our pooled capacity to provide appropriately scaled airpower. Ideally, these arrangements will involve equipment that is interoperable or shared, as with pooled resources such as the multi-national C-17 consortium called the Strategic Airlift Capability, which I observed firsthand a few days ago. This consortium is remarkable, with 12 member nations that may not have a requirement to purchase their own dedicated C-17s, but who clearly can benefit from underwriting flying hours on the Heavy Airlift Wing's shared aircraft. Instead of lacking this capability entirely, and having to rely on contract air, member nations instead have transported personnel and equipment to and from Afghanistan, responded with life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian aid to Haiti, and contributed in many other significant ways. All told, they have amassed over 4,000 flight hours, transporting nearly 14,000 tons of cargo and more than 6,000 passengers to six continents, all in the first year of operations.

Arguably, however, even more vital than equipment sharing and interoperability is close collaboration between our people. Beyond platforms, weapons, and sensors, our people are the linchpins that can overcome any shortfalls in materiel performance. It would be difficult, however, to assure the reverse condition, because even extraordinary degrees of material interoperability or



commonality cannot be expected to make up for airmen not being effective in their interactions with their counterparts.

Therefore, building partnerships, in addition to building capacities and sustaining our traditional alliances, is a focus area for the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Air Force. Our strategy includes a continued emphasis on joint education, training, and exercise opportunities with partner air forces. Through these interactions, enduring relationships are nurtured over time, with a long-term focus. So, as lieutenants and captains of today train and exercise together, they, as colonels and generals of tomorrow, stand to lead operational and strategic efforts more effectively together. With these enduring partnerships, we can hope to achieve bona fide, collective full-spectrum capability with interactive and interoperable partner air forces.

Airpower Contributions to the Future Geostrategic Environment

Balancing risk, effectiveness, and efficiency—all together—informs us on the nature and scope of our security requirements, and what airpower can do to provide necessary and appropriately-tailored capabilities. Regardless of the particular balance between capabilities and capacities, the end state still must be a highly capable and nimble force, albeit perhaps smaller, that can respond across the full spectrum of military operations.

In the United States Air Force, we are focusing on a future force that continues to be capable, reliable, and responsive in four core areas where we have traditionally contributed, and which we are confident will be our enduring contributions: (1) control of the air and space where U.S. and friendly forces must operate, and assured access to cyberspace as required to command and control our capabilities; (2) precision strike; (3) rapid mobility; and (4) air- and space-borne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. And, in each of these mission areas, U.S. Airmen will provide another core contribution: the enabling function of command and control of air, space, and cyber assets.

Very importantly, we will maintain global reach and focus, and with this broad perspective, we will continue to conceive of domain access and freedom of action as being increasingly interdependent. This perspective drives us to strengthen even



further our collaboration with our Joint teammates in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and special operations.

For instance, our experience in Afghanistan definitively illustrates the criticality of airpower in close-air support of ground maneuver, even employing airframes that were not originally intended or designed for that particular purpose. Through close coordination between aircrews, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, and ground commanders, we have effectively evolved Vietnam- and DESERT STORM-era close-air support doctrine that required extensive pre-planning, into one that can respond nearly real-time to meet emerging requirements for fire support on the ground—one that is precise, discriminate, and compliant with commander's intent.

On the high seas, we are working to further integrate airpower with naval and marine forces, toward the protection of strategically vital lines of communications—from Malacca to Hormuz to Bab-el-Mandeb. Assured access to these strategic transit points is vital not only to regional stability but also to the global economy. The global commons—areas of the sea, air, and space domains that are beyond national jurisdiction—are not only militarily significant; they are strategically significant, underpinning our global system of free-market trade and commerce, communications and transportation, and other peaceful activities that help to reinforce productive interconnections, transparency, predictability, and ultimately, regional and global stability.

And, because our ability to command and control our assets and systems heavily relies on cyberspace—and because transnational cyber security issues affect us all—we must continue to assure access to and freedom of action in this vital medium as well. To that end, we are rethinking how traditional tenets of warfighting and constructs of operational mediums apply to cyberspace. At the moment, there certainly are more questions than there are answers. Key issues such as deterrence, threat attribution, thresholds of response, and implications of conflict escalation, as they pertain to cyberspace, are still largely unaddressed and unresolved. As a departure point, we appreciate that cyberspace is its own medium, and that historic paradigms are not directly transferrable from the maritime, land, air, and space domains to this still up-and-coming virtual medium.



Conclusion

With the ongoing period of constrained resources, greater efficiency has become increasingly urgent, while increased effectiveness remains an imperative. This is true for our respective nations as well as our international partnerships and alliances.

Airpower can be tailored, adapted, and employed with unequaled rapidity, range, versatility, precision, and responsiveness, whether the effects that we seek are kinetic or non-kinetic. It is important for us, as airmen, to continue to advocate airpower's many benefits, and inform our respective national dialogues on what airmen can reliably provide.

Although we each might profess that we can ill-afford any more crises and requirements at the moment, we alas do not have the ability to cut off the flow of strategically-significant events into our own preferred timeline—today or tomorrow. Therefore, we must be fully focused on maximum preparedness. I look forward to working with you, my fellow airmen, as we endeavor to cooperatively unleash the innovation and creativity that inherently resides in our air and space professionals, and to present to our national leaders more strategic options as we pursue our shared interests.

I wish to thank our gracious hosts again, for the opportunity to share a few thoughts today, and more importantly, for the warm fellowship and hospitality for which you are so well-known. And, we wish the men and women of the Turkish Air Force the very best as they proceed boldly toward their next centennial.

To all: please accept my expression of highest regards from the men and women of the United States Air Force. I thank you all very sincerely, and suggest that we all continue, in our own ways, to "Aim High."