



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



OCT 14 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL AIRMEN

SUBJECT: Declaration on Diversity

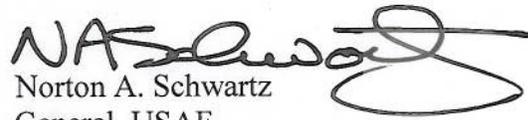
Through decades of military and national security experience, we have witnessed that mission success hinges upon the diversity of our force throughout our ranks. Diversity, as broadly defined by the Air Force, aggregates our strengths, perspectives, and capabilities in a way that transcends individual contributions. A performance- and merit-based organization composed of Airmen from across a broad range of backgrounds enables the Air Force to think critically, to engage in innovative decision-making, and to avoid “groupthink.” Diversity is a necessity. Indeed, our experience has shown diversity allows us, as an armed force, to deal more effectively with challenges to our national interests wherever they may arise.

In our global operations in defense of the Nation, cross-cultural competencies are key to mission success. On a tactical level, mission success requires the unique experiences and talents of Airmen of various backgrounds, ethnicities, races, genders, and cultural experiences. On a strategic level, a diverse force empowers Airmen to transcend merely learning about other cultures, and to strive for deeper, more meaningful global relationships. As public servants, and as military members who did not experience the current levels of diversity in the Air Force when we began our respective careers, we have been convinced, over time, that our improved diversity posture has substantially enhanced our Air Force. There is no substitute for living and working in a diverse military environment, while preparing for enduring global engagement and conducting global operations.

Embracing diversity enhances unit cohesion and the Air Force’s ability to carry out our mission. We have consistently observed that the ability to identify with senior leaders who came to the Air Force from a familiar background is largely unrivaled in persuading an individual of his or her opportunities in the Air Force. And in conducting missions throughout the world, we have found the sincerity of our beliefs in American values is often measured by the breadth of the people whom we deploy. Similarly, the respect and support of all our citizens is vital to our ability to recruit and retain the very best talent in this great country.

From our perspective, diversity throughout our Air Force is a military necessity. Therefore, consistent with our constitutional obligations, we will recruit, retain, and develop Airmen representative of the full spectrum of the American people whom we serve. We will promote an Air Force culture that embraces diversity and provides the opportunity for all Airmen to reach their full potential, and provide the required supporting programs and resources. And, we will remain the world's finest Air Force by maximizing our warfighting capabilities through, among other virtues, the diversity of our Airmen.


Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force


Norton A. Schwartz
General, USAF
Chief of Staff


James A. Roy
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force