



Air Force Association
Breakfast Series
Monday, 11 June 2012
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General Norty Schwartz

**As Prepared
for Delivery**

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Introduction

Mike, as always, thank you for hosting me, and for that very kind introduction. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to spend time with all of you today.

More importantly, I thank you for your steady support for our Airmen and their families. They continue to serve our Nation faithfully, even though they face many uncertainties, both in the future security environment and with our fiscal circumstance. As a Nation, we will continue to call on our service men and women to be innovative and efficient as they strive to maintain maximum effectiveness.

For our part, as military supporters and concerned citizens, we all need to ensure that our national strategies and policies set our service members up for success, which is why top civilian and military leaders are committed to the number one priority of avoiding a so-called “hollow force.” This morning, I’d like to add a little more fidelity to this discussion of avoiding a “hollow force,” including the ongoing dialogue on active and reserve component balance. These and other discussions are important to ensuring our overall effectiveness of the U.S. Air Force and Armed Forces.

Balancing Risk: Readiness, Force Structure, and Modernization

When we speak of operational effectiveness, we are talking about securing the appropriate balance of three separate but very closely related dimensions—readiness, modernization, and force structure—that mutually affect each other, and must be carefully integrated together. A shortfall in one or more of these dimensions leads to insufficiencies that also are distinct but intertwined—respectively: a hollow, aging, and poorly postured force. This complex interplay is why the oft-referenced “delicate balance” is so difficult to achieve.

So, to my first point—**readiness**: This is the dimension of effectiveness that, when lacking, technically results in a hollow force. By that, we mean that although force structure exists on paper, its readiness to perform is largely illusory. In my



own short hand, I refer to this as “airplanes without engines and guns without bullets.” Common culprits include system-wide deficiencies in resourcing for training, unit equipment, or operations and maintenance, and related unit morale and personnel retention issues.

Maintaining readiness requires us to prioritize our contributions to the Joint team, and to resource, at appropriate levels, our critical activities and infrastructure. Consistent with the Defense Strategic Guidance, we addressed Air Force readiness most broadly in terms of our ability to partner with the Joint team in denying an aggressor’s large-scale objectives in one region, while imposing unacceptable costs on a second opportunistic aggressor in a different region. This force posture, as well as no longer sizing U.S. forces to conduct large-scale, protracted stability operations, represents an austerity-driven curbing of our strategic appetite, a sharper focus on the likeliest contingencies, and the resultant prioritization of requirements and capabilities as articulated by the defense strategy’s 10 enumerated core mission areas of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Given that we have chosen to trade some size and capacity in favor of quality and effectiveness, our strategy to prioritize Air Force activities was to focus on these 10 mission areas—particularly those that emphasize airpower and Air Force capabilities, such as deterring and defeating aggression, projecting power in anti-access and area-denial environments, conducting space and cyber operations, and maintaining the preponderance of our Nation’s nuclear deterrent. Our emphasis on enduring and unique Air Force contributions to the Joint team—domain control of air and space; global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; rapid global mobility; and global strike—will ensure that our efforts are focused properly on contributing to the attainment of the defense strategy’s top priorities. These four core contributions represent the Air Force’s highest-priority mission areas, whose required capabilities we will protect in a budget-constrained environment.

Currently, we are addressing some of our training, equipment, and operations and maintenance challenges by, among other lines of effort, continuing to take a holistic view of the entire Total Force—active duty, guard, and reserve—and building upon our progress with Total Force Integration (TFI) and the collective airpower



capabilities that Air Force TFI brings to bear. When constituted and operated properly, TFI associations also create much-needed efficiencies, both in operations and with overhead. All considered, TFI associations add capacity at reduced cost during surge operations; they leverage experience and encourage retention of vital human capital; and they increase Total Force combat capabilities and effectiveness.

Therefore, in addition to the 100 TFI associations that we currently maintain, we intend to increase this number to 115 associations, if permitted by the Congress, for Fiscal Year 2013, across a variety of weapon systems such as the F-16 and C-130J, and across combat enablers and functional areas such as tankers, RED HORSE, security forces, and intelligence. This includes our plan to add active associations at all Air Reserve Command fighter locations, and on the mobility side, to establish active or classic associations at all future KC-46 units in the continental United States.

To my second point: **modernization**. Because it ensures the force's longer-term viability, modernization is vitally important in maintaining overall effectiveness. Insufficient research and development, test and evaluation, and procurement efforts tend to threaten this future viability. Such was largely the case during the 1990s, as well as in the post-9/11 era, during which the lion's share of the defense budget had to be committed to current operations. As a result, we are managing a significant and ongoing rise in average aircraft age: fighters at 22 years old, bombers at 35 years, and tankers at 47 years.

To ensure our longer-term viability, we have been especially dedicated to mitigating the risk from this long pause in modernization. Specifically, we are ensuring that we prioritize our acquisition strategy appropriately, and avoid future procurement pauses or acquisition missteps. We are protecting—in some cases, even increasing—our investments in our top acquisition priorities such as the KC-46A tanker; our variant of the Joint Strike Fighter, the F-35A; the Long-Range Strike family of systems; Space-Based Infrared, Advanced Extremely-High Frequency, and GPS-III satellite systems; and remotely-piloted aircraft.

But along with tending to these important materiel efforts, we also must remember the personnel side of modernization. We therefore continue to emphasize



our recruiting efforts, our initial and advanced training and development activities, and our retention measures—all to ensure that our manpower needs are met by our most precious resource: Airmen who are current on their skills and relevant with their experience. For these manpower efforts, we are leveraging the relative strengths of the active and reserve components of the Total Force, with much of the recruiting, and initial and advanced formalized technical training, occurring in the active component, and significant operational “seasoning” and experiencing occurring in the reserve component.

Finally, to the third element of operational effectiveness: When we refer to proper **force structure**, we are talking about ensuring that the force is appropriately sized, composed, and balanced across the Total Force to execute our defense strategy effectively. This involves extremely intricate considerations to ensure not only that our force is able to meet current demands, but also is sustainable and effective over the longer term.

There are two important considerations for force structure—first, proper sizing, composition, and resourcing, because inappropriately sized and composed force structure can result in units, and ultimately a Total Force, that are ill-suited for and mismatched with assigned missions. We therefore are ensuring that our manning, our equipment, and our mission and operations concepts are assigned appropriately throughout the entire Total Force.

The second force structure consideration is balance between active and reserve components. A significant consequence of imbalanced force composition is the challenge of unsustainable deployment rates—that is, deployed time in relation to “dwell” time at home station. High deployment-to-dwell ratios, sustained over time, can negatively affect the morale and retention of skilled and experienced personnel, because while our force is decidedly resilient, it certainly is not unbreakable.

And because a high activity ratio ultimately reduces, over time, our effectiveness, particularly of high-demand units but also of the Total Force as a whole, we would prefer that deployment-to-dwell ratios for our active component forces are sustained at a one-to-three ratio—for instance: six months deployed, followed by eighteen months at home station. However, the norm has been, and will



likely remain, closer to a one-to-two ratio—six months on deployment, and twelve months at home. And for our reserve components, we would prefer not less than a one-to-four activity ratio, and ideally one-to-five, based on reserve component Airmen continuing to volunteer to deploy as they have been in substantial numbers for many years.

To achieve these ratios, which balance operational needs with acceptable stress on the force, we had to make, again, very difficult choices, with proper consideration for a multitude of factors. You can see, therefore, that with the difficult cuts in sheer numbers that we had to make, the more difficult task was actually to balance active and reserve component reductions appropriately, after two decades of Total Force end strength and force structure reductions that increased the reserve components from 25% to 35% of Total Force Airmen, and from 23% to 28% of total aircraft inventory. This previous rebalance, beginning in 1990, was appropriate to optimize the Total Force for requirements then, so that we could conduct post-DESERT STORM steady-state rotations with what essentially was a garrison force that had not yet transitioned to an expeditionary one. We have absolutely no doubts that those investments in the reserve component were—and they certainly remain—essential to the overall health and effectiveness of the Total Force.

But the circumstances and demand signals, both now and trending, are fundamentally different than they were in 1990 and in the years immediately following. Our reserve component is best optimized—or, put another way, our reserve component affords us with the oft-referenced cost savings—when guard and reserve Airmen are deployed at lower rates than their active-duty counterparts. Therefore, the current force structure again needs to be re-optimized in relation to current realities and future eventualities. Through careful, Joint-sanctioned modeling, we determined that we could not sustain further active component cuts without jeopardizing the collective ability of the Total Force to support our Nation's strategic interests. The failure to decelerate the pace of cuts to the active component puts at risk our collective ability to conduct future surges, to operate through the surge successfully, and then to fulfill post-surge, steady-state rotational requirements—all of which the Nation will continue to demand of its Air Force.



Under our current strategy, we have what we believe to be the proper balance that mitigates this risk. We are rebalancing the Total Force also to sustain the unique roles that the active component will continue to fulfill for the entire Total Force—notably, the preponderance of recruiting, and the initial and advanced technical training that I mentioned earlier, as well as virtually all of Total Force research and development, test and evaluation, procurement, and filling of Air Staff, Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and interagency positions. Equally importantly, we are rebalancing also to ensure the unique and essential role that the Air National Guard plays in domestic contingencies and in satisfying civil support requirements.

Improving Strategic Planning Processes and Transparency

Again, these three major dimensions of effectiveness—readiness, modernization, and force structure—were balanced carefully through Joint-sanctioned simulation and modeling. Through these analytic excursions, we, including Air Force Reserve and National Guard Bureau leadership, came to understand what trade-offs were possible, and we came to deliberate on how best to fashion a ready and superb Total Force amidst substantial budgetary pressures and declining materiel resources. Despite the fact that we did not always agree with complete unanimity, which is understandable due to different perspectives and institutional imperatives between the active and reserve components, we stand by our consensus—together.

More importantly, we stand unified and focused on our common goal of sustaining a ready, vital, and viable Total Force. As we move forward, we will give due consideration to different viewpoints that are fact-based and unemotionally deliberated, for we know that different perspectives ultimately can strengthen our Total Force. So it is in this spirit of candid and collegial discourse that the reserve component leadership and I are developing the terms of reference for an independent study—the Air Force Reserve Component 2020 Study—which will evaluate our ongoing Total Force efforts, and work toward achieving an even more effective Total Force. This effort may well be subsumed by Senate Armed Services



Committee language, establishing a national commission to independently assess the Air Force Total Force.

In the meantime, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard leadership will be involved at every step of our analysis and decision-making, including through our corporate processes to address wide-ranging issues such as Total Force associations, optimal force composition and component ratios, and ongoing development of core function master plans. Be assured that, as a Total Force, we are united in common cause to provide, more efficiently and effectively, full-spectrum airpower for America.

Conclusion

With the passage of the Budget Control Act last August, the release of the new Defense Strategic Guidance in early January, and the Fiscal Year 2013 budget submission in March, I appreciate that there are widespread feelings of uncertainty—from our Airmen and their families, to our Joint and Interagency teammates, to our private industry partners who support our efforts with valued products and services. And moreover, with the ongoing possibility of sequestration cutting the defense budget even further and deeper, and with uncertain prospects for the passage of a defense authorization and a federal budget, we, quite frankly, are looking at a prolonged season of uncertainty into FY 13 and beyond.

But while I appreciate the various levels of apprehension that many are feeling, I find a degree of confidence in noting our collective resilience and ability to respond to America's needs, and that when challenges confront us, we seize the opportunity, and typically perform admirably. For those of us who have been around a while, this is not the first period of austerity that we have experienced. The reality is, we will handle this, and we will remain the world's premier and most feared Air Force. It will take discipline, cost-consciousness, and teamwork to retain our enduring advantages. But I am as certain as I am standing here that we can do this.

As a matter of our sustained rotational requirements, your Air Force will continue to be almost everywhere, fulfilling full-spectrum airpower requirements. We therefore can easily add to the list of Air Force capabilities that the Defense Strategic Guidance emphasizes: that of providing a stabilizing presence virtually



wherever our national interests lie. This is why it is so crucial that we accurately and honestly discuss pressing matters such as the balance between the active and reserve components, and what roles we are asking each component of our Total Force to fulfill. Clearly, we benefit immeasurably from the contributions of our guard and reserve Airmen, which is why we continue to ensure that resourcing our reserve component not only is sufficient and appropriate, but that it remains a top priority, ultimately to ensure the capability of the Guard and Reserve to do what the Nation needs our Total Force to do. To the extent that the Air Force has been in sustained wartime operations for more than two decades, and that we expect that our post-surge rotations will continue, we will continue to be diligent, as we have been, in structuring the force appropriately. This will help to keep the Air Force globally postured and effective in projecting global power—both kinetic and non-kinetic, from the homeland and elsewhere, to anywhere on Earth. And it sums up why your United States Air Force will continue to be an active participant in, and a shaper of, the future security and geopolitical environment in which we live.

Thank you for inviting me to your breakfast today, and for your kind attention. I now look forward to your questions.