

# GLOBAL VIGILANCE, GLOBAL REACH, GLOBAL POWER FOR AMERICA



THE WORLD'S GREATEST AIR FORCE — POWERED BY AIRMEN, FUELED BY INNOVATION



***“A modern, autonomous, and thoroughly trained Air Force in being at all times will not alone be sufficient, but without it there can be no national security.”***

— General H. H. ‘Hap’ Arnold, USAAF

*“Not to have an adequate air force in the present state of the world is to compromise the foundations of national freedom and independence.”*

— Prime Minister Winston Churchill

*“I think maybe the Air Force has been certainly among the most adaptable parts of our national military instrument of power. Every Service has made some adaptations, but I would suggest [that the Air Force’s] seems to me, in my experience, to be most prominent, most visible, most important.”*

— Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
General Martin Dempsey, USA

*“The story of the United States Air Force is the story of the search for ... innovation.”*

— Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Admiral Mike Mullen, USN

*“Higher,  
ever higher.”*

— Last words of Peruvian aviator  
Georges Chavez, 1910

*“IN ORDER TO ASSURE AN ADEQUATE NATIONAL DEFENSE, IT IS NECESSARY — AND SUFFICIENT — TO BE IN A POSITION IN CASE OF WAR TO CONQUER THE COMMAND OF THE AIR.”*

— GENERAL GIULIO DOUHET

*“Air power is like poker.*

*A second-best hand is like none at all — it will cost you dough and win you nothing.”*

— General George Kenney,  
Commander of Allied Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific, 1942-45.

*“The future of this country and the welfare of the free world depends upon our success in space.”*

— President Lyndon B. Johnson

*The most important thing is to have a flexible approach... The truth is no one knows exactly what air fighting will be like in the future. We can't say anything will stay as it is, but we also can't be certain the future will conform to particular theories, which so often, between the wars, have proved wrong.*

— Brigadier General Robin Olds,  
USAF

***“Air power is indivisible.***

***If you split it up into compartments, you merely pull it to pieces and destroy its greatest asset – its flexibility.”***

— Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery

***“The next war may be fought by airplanes with no men in them at all... Take everything you've learned about aviation in war, throw it out of the window, and let's go to work on tomorrow's aviation.”***

— General H. H. ‘Hap’ Arnold,  
USAAF, VJ Day, 1945



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# MESSAGE FROM CSAF

Airmen and Airpower Advocates:

Since the Air Force was born in 1947, the core missions of the United States Air Force haven't fundamentally changed:

1947	Today
Air Superiority	Air and Space Superiority
Air Reconnaissance	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
Airlift	Rapid Global Mobility
Strategic Air Force	Global Strike
Coordination of Air Defense	Command and Control

What has radically changed is how the Air Force performs these missions. Due to technological advances, we now fly faster, farther, and higher than ever before using aircraft and spacecraft that no one could have imagined at the time of our Service's creation. For example, instead of snapping black and white photos of enemy troop positions, Airmen now control remotely piloted aircraft that capture thousands of hours of full motion video every day. We have also expanded where we operate. In 1947, we primarily operated in the air. Today, we carry out all our core missions through air, space, and cyberspace.

The result—*Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power* for America.

In January 2013, we released the Air Force vision: "The World's Greatest Air Force — Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation." It captures what the Air Force is all about and what we should focus on for tomorrow. This document builds on that vision and explains how our Air Force and its Airmen provide *Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power*.

To Airmen: This document will remind you of what your fellow Airmen do across our Service and help you pinpoint how you do your part in contributing to *Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power* for America. I want you to find yourself in this document. Make no mistake—whether you're a pilot, maintainer, special operator, medical specialist, instructor, knowledge operator, or any other job in the Air Force, you're an absolutely critical member of our team. Thank you for being a part of the world's greatest Air Force!

To our airpower advocates: This document should help you understand how our fantastic Airmen contribute to the joint team and to our Nation. I encourage you to get to know these outstanding men and women personally and help us tell the Air Force story. Thank you for all that you do to support our Airmen and our Air Force.

**AIRPOWER!**



Mark A. Welsh III  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff



# THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF AIRPOWER

*Airpower has become predominant, both as a deterrent to war, and—in the eventuality of war—as the devastating force to destroy an enemy's potential and fatally undermine his will to wage war.*  
— General of the Army Omar Bradley

In January 2013, the United States Air Force released a vision statement that focuses on “Airmen, Mission, and Innovation.” In addition to recognizing Airmen as the power behind the Air Force and acknowledging the importance of innovation to our story, the vision encourages Airmen to understand and explain their role in producing airpower for America by telling the story of the Air Force through their own unique perspective. Building upon the vision, this paper defines the Air Force’s five enduring core missions—air and space superiority, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), rapid global mobility, global strike, and command and control—and explains how innovative Airmen bring them together to provide *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America.

The 21st century is a time of unusual volatility due to the spread of advanced technology, global economic and energy pressures, and the evolutionary forces of social change. Accordingly, despite the best analyses and projections by national security experts, the time and place of the next crisis are never certain and are rarely what we expect. In addition, our military has an imperative to spend its resources in a fiscally responsible way. This means that our Nation requires not only a flexible, precise, and lethal force that is capable of rapidly responding anywhere on the globe to protect and advance America’s interests, but also one that can do so at a relatively low cost in relation to the return on investment. The Air Force meets this need and offers freedom of action to our joint and coalition partners through our ability to integrate our core missions to provide *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power*.

From the earliest days of organized warfare, controlling the high ground has been vital to successful military operations. Early airpower advocates, such as Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, understood that aircraft can influence events through “the ability to do something in the air”—something we still do as an Air Force. But how the Air Force provides airpower has evolved significantly from its early days. By integrating airpower capabilities within and across the air, space, and cyberspace domains, Airmen bring to life the Air Force’s core missions. And those core missions are indispensable to our Nation’s ability to conduct military operations successfully.



Today, Airmen are exploiting and mastering emerging technologies not only in air warfare, but also in space and cyberspace, giving the Air Force the ability to project global military power on a scale that our adversaries cannot match. Exploiting such technologies is not unique to the Air Force, but we are the only Service that brings them together in ways that allow our sister Services the freedom to maneuver in their respective domains without fear of attack by enemy air forces. The air arms of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are supremely capable at what they do—facilitating their parent Service’s respective mastery of operations on the ground, at sea, and in a littoral environment. However, America has only one Air Force that was specifically designed and is precisely employed to exploit the unique global advantages realized from operating in air, space, and cyberspace.

Air Force airpower gives America the ability to control and exploit this ultimate high ground that is essential to winning our Nation’s wars. No other Service, or combination of Services, can deliver the capability and capacity that the Air Force provides to the warfighter in our core mission areas.



# THE POWER OF AIR MEN

War will remain a human affair fought over human needs, desires, and flaws. And for that reason, we can be certain of one thing — that the America of 2030 will still need the men and women of a strong and powerful Air Force to ensure her security.  
— P.W. Singer, Brookings Institution

The effectiveness of Air Force airpower comes directly from the power of Airmen. While it is natural to define the Air Force in terms of its aircraft, missiles, or satellites, in reality, the Service's unmatched capabilities exist only and precisely because of the imagination, innovation, and dedication of its people. Since the airplane was employed over the battlefields of World War I, Airmen have stood for and pioneered new and innovative ways to shape the fight and reinvent the battle itself. Whereas pre-Kitty Hawk warriors relied on breaking through fortified lines on the ground, Airmen have always sought to go over, not through, those fortifications to defeat our enemies and achieve the Nation's objectives.



This spirit of innovation, of seeing problems from an alternative perspective, is in our culture, in our heritage, and in every Airman—Active, Guard, Reserve and Civilian—regardless of his or her specialty or role. Airmen characteristically view security challenges differently—globally, without boundaries. We focus on deterring war and, when called upon, leading the force to victory by providing integrated airpower operations that achieve desired results with less risk to people and equipment.

The Air Force's competitive advantage begins with its ability to recruit, develop, and retain innovative warriors with strong character, a belief in respect for others, and a commitment to high standards and our core values of *Integrity First*, *Service Before Self*, and *Excellence In All We Do*. Even though the Air Force has become significantly smaller since 1947, our Nation has maintained an asymmetric airpower advantage because Airmen continue to lead the way in integrating military capabilities across air, space, and cyberspace. In the face of an unknown and unpredictable future, the American military's ability to conduct successful joint operations is enhanced by the power of Airmen.





# AIR FORCE CORE MISSIONS

Of the three major Services, the Air Force has primary interest in all operations in the air.  
— Key West Agreement, 1947

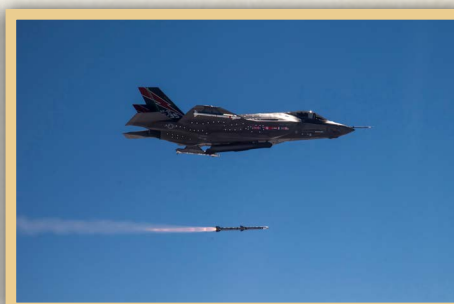
Airmen bring to the Nation's military portfolio five interdependent and integrated core missions that have endured since President Truman originally assigned airpower roles and missions to the Air Force in 1947. Although the way we do them will constantly evolve, the Air Force will continue to perform these missions so that our military can respond quickly and appropriately to unpredictable threats and challenges. Today, we call our core missions: (1) air and space superiority; (2) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); (3) rapid global mobility; (4) global strike; and (5) command and control.

Through these core missions, the Air Force provides *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America. Each of these core missions is, in its own right, vitally important to the defense of our national interests; however, no single core mission functions independently. Airpower is maximized when Airmen leverage its unique characteristics—speed, range, flexibility, precision, lethality, and persistence—to harness the integrated power of our air, space, and cyber forces. The Air Force is effective precisely because its interdependent operations are synchronized to provide an unparalleled array of airpower options, giving America the ability to respond quickly anywhere in the world.

## AIR AND SPACE SUPERIORITY ... FREEDOM FROM ATTACK AND THE FREEDOM TO ATTACK

From the Pacific island-hopping campaign of World War II to the success of coalition forces in Operations ODYSSEY DAWN and UNIFIED PROTECTOR (Libya) in 2011 and through today, air superiority has been and remains an essential precondition to successful military operations. It ensures that the advantages of the other Air Force core missions, as well as the formidable capabilities of our sister Services, are broadly available to combatant commanders. It includes the ability to control the air so that our military forces do not have to worry about being attacked from the air, while ensuring that joint forces have the freedom to attack in the air, on the ground, and at sea.

Air superiority has provided our Nation with a decades-long asymmetric advantage. Joint force and coalition commanders have come to expect the mission-essential air superiority that over 115,000 of America's Airmen deliver daily. The Air Force has given them ample reason—not since April 15, 1953, has an enemy combat aircraft killed a servicemember in the American ground forces. This revolutionary degree of control has not only allowed Airmen to accomplish their missions, but has allowed all American forces the freedom of action to operate without the threat of attack from enemy aircraft. Whether friendly naval forces are helping to secure vital sea lines of communication and transit, amphibious forces are conducting over-the-beach landings, special operations forces are executing counterterrorism missions, or ground forces are engaged in maneuvers, these operations depend upon our Airmen to provide mission-essential air superiority. Without it, our Nation's military would have to radically change the way it fights, which would likely occur at the price of more lives lost.







America's freedom to operate effectively across the spectrum of conflict rests not only on the Air Force's ability to dominate in the air, but also on its ability to exploit space. Every day, over 15,000 Airmen play a role in ensuring space superiority. As the Nation's space force, the Air Force provides critical capabilities



that enhance the military's ability to navigate accurately, see clearly, communicate securely, and strike precisely. Joint, interagency, and coalition forces depend on Air Force space operations to perform their missions every day, on every continent, in the air, on the land, and at sea. In a dangerous and uncertain future, the ability to access and exploit space, even when others try to deny us, will be vital to our Nation's security.



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Although air and space superiority underwrite the freedom of action required for all joint military operations, there is no guarantee of it in the future. In coming years, our Nation's ability to gain and maintain superiority in all operating domains—air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace—will become progressively more difficult as sophisticated technologies continue to proliferate. In contested environments, our air superiority future depends on modern technology and fifth-generation fighter capability. Another key to maintaining air and space superiority is ready and trained Airmen who are properly equipped for their mission. When called upon, these Airmen must possess a well-honed combat edge so that they are ready to prevail even against the most advanced opponents. Therefore, we will couple emerging technologies with smart Airmen to devise new and effective combinations to preserve our first look, first shot, first kill capability. We must also look for opportunities in air, space, and cyber to collaborate with industry and our international partners as a way to maintain the edge our Nation requires of us as an air force and as a part of the joint warfighting team.







## INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE ... EYES AND EARS ON ADVERSARIES



Since the beginnings of armed conflict, superior knowledge has been one of the keys to effective combat power. For over 100 years, Airmen have exploited the vertical dimension to gain a decisive information advantage over our foes. The evolution of globally integrated ISR has fundamentally changed how America fights wars. Today, the Air Force has embraced globally integrated ISR as one of the Air Force's feature calling cards. ISR is much more than a support function. It is the foundation upon which every joint, interagency, and coalition operation achieves success. Our 34,000 ISR Airmen identify and assess adversary targets and vulnerabilities

from hideouts to bunkers to mobile launchers with greater accuracy than ever seen in the history of warfare. In 2012 alone, ISR Airmen shaped combat plans for 33 named operations, enabled the removal of 700 enemy combatants from the fight, provided critical adversary awareness and targeting intelligence to U.S. and coalition forces in over 250 "troops-in-contact" engagements, enhanced battlespace awareness through 540,000 hours of sustained overwatch of tactical forces and communication lines, and identified over 100 weapons caches and explosive devices that would have otherwise targeted American and partner forces.

Air Force ISR is about helping leaders make informed decisions to maintain deterrence, contain crises, or achieve success in battle. Through a mix of aircraft, satellites, and other technologies that collect, exploit, and disseminate critical information, Air Force ISR gives policymakers the ability to minimize uncertainty about our adversaries and their capabilities. It does so by strengthening deterrence, making adversaries act more cautiously, providing intelligence that allows commanders a decision-making advantage, and delivering real-time information on which joint, interagency, and coalition operations rely to fight effectively and win. Globally integrated ISR allows American forces to carry out functions that they previously performed with much greater danger and at higher cost.

In recent years, the development of Air Force ISR capabilities has focused mainly on meeting the needs of permissive combat environments. In more contested future environments, gaining and maintaining an ISR advantage will become increasingly difficult and even more important. Therefore, the Air Force will focus primarily on enhancing its ISR capabilities for operations in contested environments. Accomplishing this will require updating the current mix of ISR assets, while also giving significant and sustained attention to modernizing Air Force ISR systems and capabilities.







## RAPID GLOBAL MOBILITY ... DELIVERY ON DEMAND

American power can be projected quickly to anywhere on the face of the earth as a result of the Air Force's capability for rapid mobility. The Air Force's 122,000 air mobility Airmen provide swift deployment and the ability to sustain operations by delivering essential equipment and personnel for missions ranging from major combat to humanitarian relief operations around the world. Mobility forces also provide in-flight refueling, which is a unique Air Force capability and the linchpin to joint power projection at intercontinental distances.

The strategic impact of rapid global mobility is woven throughout Air Force history—from the Berlin Airlift during the late 1940s, when the Allies sustained a city of two million citizens for more than six months as a symbol of our Nation's commitment to freedom, to today, as Air Force transport aircraft depart for a mission every 90 seconds, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. On any given day, the Air Force's inventory of mobility aircraft delivers critical personnel and cargo and provides airdrop of time-sensitive supplies, food, and ammunition on a global scale. In 2012 alone, Airmen flew 38,000 airlift missions, including 1,300 airdrops that delivered 40 million pounds of lifesaving sustainment to coalition forces in Afghanistan.



Beyond moving cargo and equipment, Air Force rapid global mobility is vitally important to the individual Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman, and Coast Guardsman. The Air Force is saving lives with unprecedented survival rates because our highly skilled aeromedical transport teams swiftly evacuate combat casualties. The Air Force's ability to evacuate wounded troops promptly from the battlefield to emergency rear-area field hospitals and the first-response medical aid provided en route by pararescue forces or critical care air transport teams have set a new standard for the survival of wounded warriors. Servicemen and women who likely would not have survived in past conflicts now return home to their families.

We anticipate a future that requires the Air Force to provide rapid global mobility to remote, austere, and distributed locations in contested environments. Because every mission counts, we are driven to seek the most effective and efficient way to move people and equipment. New concepts and innovations that increase range, fuel efficiency, access to unimproved airfields, and load capacity will guide our future investments. Building on our recent achievements, we will continue to improve our aeromedical evacuation, precision airdrop, and in-flight refueling capabilities for use in contested environments. Whether sustaining the warfighter in any environment or delivering hope with humanitarian assistance, Airmen will ensure that our own government and international partners are strengthened with the unique capability to get assets to the fight quickly, remain in the fight, and return home safely.







## GLOBAL STRIKE ...ANY TARGET, ANY TIME

Global strike, a significant portion of America's deterrence capability, means that the Nation can project military power more rapidly, more flexibly, and with a lighter footprint than other military options. With the expertise of over 26,000 Airmen, the Air Force's nuclear and conventional precision strike forces can credibly threaten and effectively conduct global strike by holding any target on the planet at risk and, if necessary, disabling or destroying it promptly—even from bases in the continental United States. These forces possess the unique ability to achieve tactical, operational, and strategic effects all in the course of a single combat mission. Global strike missions include a wide range of crisis response and escalation control options, such as providing close air support to troops at risk, interdicting enemy forces, inserting special operations forces, and targeting an adversary's vital centers. Whether employed from forward bases or enabled by in-flight refueling, global strike derives from a wide-range of systems that include bombers, missiles, special operations platforms, fighters, and other Air Force aircraft.

Against a backdrop of increasingly contested air, space, and cyber environments around the world, the Air Force must maintain its ability to hold any target at risk. In efforts to counter our existing global strike advantage, some states that do not share our interests and values are hardening and burying key weapons and command and control facilities. The Air Force will maintain its ability to neutralize such targets so that America's military credibility will remain uncontested, allies will not worry, and potential adversaries will not be emboldened to challenge us in the pursuit of our national objectives. This capability, unmatched by any other nation's air force, will be of growing importance as America rebalances its force structure and faces potential adversaries that are modernizing their militaries to deny access to our forces. The Air Force will focus future efforts on modernizing global strike assets to ensure that American forces are prepared to act when, where, and how they are needed.







## COMMAND AND CONTROL ... TOTAL FLEXIBILITY

Airmen employ the Air Force's other four interdependent and enduring core missions through robust, adaptable, and survivable command and control systems. Using the specialized skills of over 53,000 command and control Airmen, the Air Force provides access to reliable communications and information networks so that the joint team can operate globally at a high tempo and level of intensity. Air Force command and control systems give commanders the ability to conduct highly coordinated joint operations on an unequalled scale using centralized command, distributed control, and decentralized execution.

Pervasive and highly interconnected, command and control networks will be extremely contested. The capability to deliver airpower is intimately dependent on the ability to operate effectively in cyberspace, a domain in and through which we conduct all of our core missions and which is critical to many of our command and control systems. Operations in cyberspace can magnify military effects by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of air and space operations and by helping to integrate capabilities across all domains. The use of cyberspace to conduct missions is certainly not exclusive to the Air Force; however, it is an essential component of how we bring innovative, globally focused "airmindedness" to ensure our warfighting advantage.

Getting the right information to the right person at the right time is essential to the American way of war. The Nation's advantage in command and control is under constant attack with new and more capable threats emerging daily in the areas of cyber weapons, anti-satellite systems, and electromagnetic jamming. Our adversaries are also making advances by electronically linking their own combat capabilities, which creates new military challenges that our forces must be prepared to address. To counter these challenges, the Air Force will field advanced command and control systems that are reliable, resilient, and interoperable. More importantly, we will recruit and train innovative Airmen with the expertise to build, manage, secure, and advance our complex and diverse command and control systems, while at the same time making them easy to use for our own forces.





# AIRMEN + CORE MISSIONS = GLOBAL VIGILANCE, GLOBAL REACH, GLOBAL POWER

No single core mission offers only one of the three effects of airpower—*Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, or *Global Power*—because all five core missions are necessary to provide the integrated global airpower effects that only the Air Force can supply. And each Airman, regardless of their mission-specific specialty, plays a critical role in delivering these effects. For example, a remotely piloted aircraft pilot does not just supply *Global Vigilance*, a boom operator on a tanker does not just bring *Global Reach*, and a navigator on a bomber does not just dispense *Global Power*. Using their innovative natures, these Airmen play a part in providing all three, just as all Airmen do.



Air Force history is full of examples of the ways that innovative Airmen have brought our core missions together to deliver *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power*. The ingenuity of Airmen was on full display during the first 24 hours of Operation DESERT STORM in 1991. The attack plan called for more than 150 attacks against separate targets—more targets in a single day than were attacked by the entire 8th Air Force in the first two years of the combined bomber offensive over Europe during World War II. This degree of complexity and precision, unequaled in the annals of military history, was made possible when an Airman's new theory of targeting was combined with advanced airpower technologies. The introduction of stealth technology and the expansion of

types and numbers of precision weapons, combined with a targeting approach based on achieving specific effects rather than widespread destruction, created a new concept of operations known as parallel warfare—the simultaneous application of force across the breadth and depth of the theater. When combined, these elements heralded a turning point in the character of warfare that continues to have a defining influence on how to win future conflicts.

Another powerful real-world example of Air Force *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* occurred at the start of Operation ALLIED FORCE when two B-2 stealth bombers departed Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, for their assigned targets in Serbia. As the first coalition aircraft to enter heavily defended enemy airspace, each B-2 dropped 16 satellite-aided precision bombs to attack their targets, paving the way for the rest of the initial aerial attack force to follow shortly thereafter. Over the course of the first eight weeks of the conflict, the B-2s, all flying nonstop round-trip combat sorties from Missouri, destroyed 33 percent of the total targets in the campaign. More recently, in 2013, B-2 bombers flew non-stop training sorties from Whiteman to South Korea to signal America's resolve and ability to quickly deliver airpower effects anywhere on the globe.



*Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* were also demonstrated in full force during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Bringing all of our core missions to the joint fight, the Air Force provided armed overwatch, close air support, mobility operations, and ISR. Air Force ISR, coupled with the relentless precision bombing of Iraqi forces, assured coalition commanders that their unprotected flanks were secure, allowing a lightly contested advance to Baghdad that hastened the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime after just three weeks of fighting.





In 2011, the Air Force brought our core missions together to simultaneously conduct many additional and highly diverse missions around the globe, including in Libya, Japan, and South America. In particular, after observing revolutionary events unfold across Northern Africa, the Air Force was called into action on March 19, 2011, to help enforce a United Nations-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya. In Operations ODYSSEY DAWN and UNIFIED PROTECTOR, airpower was a decisive factor during the Libyan conflict, even with a comparatively small indigenous ground force. Through airpower, our Nation was able to limit U.S. military involvement and minimize the associated cost and risks of a protracted commitment of American forces. At the same time, Airmen provided tsunami disaster relief to the Japanese people more than 5,000 miles away. Performing with characteristic

professionalism, Airmen evacuated 7,500 American citizens from hazardous zones in northeast Japan; delivered 60 percent of U.S. relief supplies; provided vital information about the devastated region to Japanese leaders; re-opened additional airfield capacity; and ultimately provided a much-needed measure of comfort in the wake of multiple disasters that occurred at the same time. Concurrently, the Air Force was providing close air support, airlift, and ISR in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM as well as supplying logistical support to promote Presidential diplomatic efforts in South America.



Every Airman—in every flight, in every squadron, in every wing, in every major command in the Air Force—plays a critical role in providing airpower. The operator cannot do her job without the maintainer doing his job; the maintainer can only do his job when the civil engineer does her job; and the civil engineer is able to do her job because support personnel ensure that she and her family are taken care of. We are all connected across all specialties and mission areas in providing *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America. Every Airman is critically important!





# AMERICA'S ASYMMETRIC ADVANTAGE

*I believe that air supremacy – in all its components – will be indispensable to maintaining American military strength, deterrence, and global reach for decades to come.*  
– Secretary of Defense Robert Gates

From airpower's earliest days, Airmen working together have exploited technology to provide essential knowledge and information on when and where to act, to move people and materials when and where needed, to control the ultimate high ground, and to strike where and when desired. In building the Air Force's culture of "over, not through," we now have an incomparable ability to act either independently or in full collaboration with our joint, interagency, and coalition partners to protect and defend our Nation and its interests. The increased use of airpower as the lead American force element is a probability for which Airmen must be fully prepared and ready to execute.



The Air Force's core missions will continue to serve America's long-term security interests by giving our Nation and its leadership unmatched options to confront the challenges of an unpredictable future. The heavy demands placed on the military to defend the Nation's interests during the last twenty years have dramatically increased the level of adaptability, creativity, and coordination between and among our sister Services, interagency partners, allies, and friends. Through it all, Air Force airpower has repeatedly been used to deter conflict, control escalation, and, when so tasked by the Nation's leadership, destroy an adversary's military capability. However, investments in Air Force capabilities and readiness are essential if the Nation is to maintain an agile, flexible, and ready force. To be effective, this force must be deliberately planned for and appropriately and consistently funded. Our highly sophisticated and capable Air Force cannot be reconstituted overnight if it is allowed to atrophy. A smaller, highly capable Air Force is clearly preferable to a larger one of lesser quality.



America's Air Force gives our Nation immensely powerful options to advance its long-term interests and protect our way of life. Today's Air Force is an indispensable hedge against the challenges of an uncertain and dangerous future. Every Airman, and every citizen, should take pride in the fact that the United States Air Force will always provide *Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power* for America.





