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for a New Defense Strategy”  
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**As Prepared  
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Page 1 of 8**



**General Norty Schwartz**

## **Introduction**

Tony, thank you for hosting us today. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here, and to discuss issues of importance to our Air Force and our national security.

With the men and women of the United States Air Force and Armed Forces serving, as always, with tremendous distinction, we had another landmark year in 2011. A year ago today, we were in the middle of the beginnings of the Arab Awakening—a few months after protests erupted in Tunis, mere weeks after uprisings began in Cairo, and a few days before President Mubarak stepped down from his nearly thirty-year reign. After observing these events as they unfolded across Northern Africa and swept into the Levant and Arabian Peninsula, the United States Air Force was called into action on March 19th, to help enforce a U.N.-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya.

We should not forget, however, that the U.S. Air Force and Armed Forces already were conducting surge operations, some 5,500 miles away, providing humanitarian and disaster relief to our friends in Japan. Performing magnificently, Airmen were singlehandedly and concurrently responsible for evacuating 7,500 American citizens from hazardous zones; delivering 60 percent—some five million pounds—of U.S. relief supplies; providing vital intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance of the incident location from remotely-piloted aircraft; opening up additional airfield capacity; and ultimately, providing a much-needed measure of comfort in the wake of multiple concurrent disasters.

When you consider that, all the while, the Air Force remained fully engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq, commencing yet another major operation in another theater of operations was not, by any means, trivial. We once again demonstrated airpower’s strategic flexibility and versatility in all of its dimensions, all at the same time, with Airmen contributing more than 65 percent of all coalition sorties in



Libya—specifically, 99 percent of operational airlift, 79 percent of in-flight refueling, 50 percent of airborne reconnaissance, and 40 percent of strike missions. All considered, these concurrent operations constituted our very own version of “March Madness,” demonstrating your Air Force’s ability to provide full-spectrum airpower that ranges intercontinental distances with unmatched speed, and spans the entire operational continuum with notable versatility.

## **Airpower Contributions to National Interests**

Our own March Madness also reaffirmed the Air Force’s capacity to surge in a matter of hours to meet wide-ranging airpower requirements—something on which our Joint teammates and the Nation have come to rely.

But given a future security environment that continues to unfold with greater ambiguity, along with budgetary pressures that continue to intensify, it was proper for us to ask ourselves: What options must we have for meeting future security challenges?

The Department of Defense therefore engaged, for the better part of last six months, in a comprehensive reevaluation of our national interests and the role that the U.S. military will play in achieving those interests. In the new Defense Strategic Guidance, we recognize that the broad contours of our national security interests endure, but that many specific geographic, technological, and security dimensions of our globalized world continue to evolve.

From a geopolitical perspective, the United States will rebalance its resources toward the Indo- and Asia-Pacific, where many economic and diplomatic opportunities have become increasingly vital to its core national interests. The Nation certainly will sustain its hard-earned foothold in and around the primary locus of violent extremism: the broader Middle East and South Asia. And we will tailor our commitments in Europe, strengthening the transatlantic alliance that, in the 20th Century, prevented a cold war from becoming hot, and which, as we continue into the 21st, will remain as the key partnership in ensuring stability in a changing and uncertain world.

To prepare, we had to make the difficult decisions to resize our Air Force. We realize that no matter how tremendous our service men and women are, simple



physics will limit the number of places in which a smaller force can perform. So with the preservation of a highly responsive and effective force as our paramount consideration—in other words, a ready force, not a hollow one—we determined that careful reductions in equipment and personnel were necessary. We essentially traded some size for sustained quality, so that, although smaller, we still will be an unmatched air force that maintains the agility, flexibility, and readiness to engage in rapid succession across the full range of threats and contingencies.

The new strategy also calls for rebalancing our surface forces from a land-intensive focus to a broader, more maritime strategic posture. We must not forget, however, that what covers one-hundred percent of both land and sea is *air and space*.

So from a capabilities point of view, the new defense strategy emphasizes airpower as fundamental to its major priorities, such as deterring and defeating aggression, projecting power in anti-access and area-denial environments, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, conducting space and cyber operations, and maintaining the preponderance of our Nation's nuclear deterrent.

And toward a broader, cross-domain posture, initiatives such as the Air-Sea Battle concept will ensure an enhanced, more strategically-oriented partnership between the Nation's air and sea services. We will assure America's freedom of navigation and action wherever we have national interests, and ensure the Nation's access to the global commons—in particular, vital lines of communication and transit that are beyond any national jurisdiction. And in providing the Nation's ability to project global power, we also ensure global access for our Nation's diplomatic and development agencies, and our ability to conduct non-military missions such as humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

## **Fiscal Constraints: Force Structure, Capabilities, and Capacities**

Therefore, the Air Force, with its substantial global responsibilities, remains committed to providing the Nation with four core and enduring capabilities: air and space control; global intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; rapid global mobility; and global strike, plus the unique ability to provide cross-domain, high-



capacity command and control of air, space, and cyber systems, integrating these capabilities across the full spectrum of operations.

While airpower will enable us to repeat scenarios similar to the enforcement of the no-fly zone in Libya, Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR is not necessarily a template for all future conflicts. But it did facilitate our Nation's contributions for seven months in Libya, at approximately the operating cost of one week in Afghanistan, and with no loss of coalition lives. And all the while, we retained the ability to withdraw as quickly as the coalition was assembled. This operation therefore demonstrated, in very compelling fashion, airpower's versatility, rapidity, and reversibility—all attributes that the new Defense Strategic Guidance emphasizes for the future U.S. Armed Forces.

But during this time of extraordinary belt-tightening, we had to make some very difficult choices in order to remain superb, even as we become leaner and shed some capacity. And considering that our budget, excluding contingency funding, has been flat since 2004, with a 12-percent real decline since 2009, we fully expect that we will be making further tough calls.

In the broadest sense, we pursued a strategy of balancing risk, to include the deliberate acceptance of additional risk, in order to align with the new strategy's requirement for the Joint Force to be capable of conducting one large-scale, combined-arms campaign in one region while denying the objectives of, or imposing unacceptable costs on, an opportunistic aggressor in a second region.

In order to achieve maximum savings at an acceptable level of risk, the Air Force has identified, in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget request, 200 fighter, mobility, and ISR aircraft for divestiture in FY 13, toward a total of 286 aircraft retirements over the Future Years Defense Plan. As a general principle, we favored multi-role systems over those that are more specialized, and emphasized more efficient common configuration of those systems that are retained, such as with our modernized C-5Ms and upgraded C-17s, F-22s, F-15Cs, and F-16s.

Retiring entire aircraft types, where possible, generally has the benefit of enabling the elimination of entire support infrastructures, thus gaining even greater efficiency. But if fleet retirement was not viable or economical, then we evaluated



options for eliminating the least capable or highest cost aircraft, in terms of cost of operations and sustainment. In total, we estimate that this divestiture will likely save us a bit under 9 billion dollars over the Future Years Defense Plan.

Specifically, this divestiture includes retiring or reclassifying 123 fighters—102 A-10s and 21 F-16s—amounting to a seven-squadron reduction. This leaves us with 54 combat-coded fighter squadrons that maintain, with acceptable risk, the requisite level of tactical fighter capability and capacity while providing a bridge to the fifth-generation F-35 fighter.

On the mobility side, we plan on the divestiture of some 130 aircraft that exceed requirements due to the new defense strategy's parallel reductions in land forces. This includes retiring all 27 C-5As for their historically lower mission-capable rates relative to the 222 C-17 and 52 C-5M aircraft that will remain; divesting of the niche C-27 force structure of 38 aircraft in favor of more versatile C-130 aircraft; and retiring the 65 oldest C-130s to streamline operations and maintenance activities. So in addition to retaining a total of 275 C-17 and C-5M strategic airlifters, we will continue to operate 318 C-130 H- and J-model aircraft. And as a bridge to initial deliveries in Fiscal Year 2016 of new KC-46A aircraft, our aerial refueling fleet will be 453 aircraft strong after the planned retirement of 20 KC-135 aircraft.

Finally, we will adjust the numbers in our ISR fleet, beginning with the divestiture of all 18 Block 30 RQ-4 aircraft in favor of more mature and proven U-2 sensors and aircraft. This specific initiative will generate savings of around 2.5 billion dollars over the Future Years Defense Plan. We'll also divest all 11 RC-26s, and retire an E-8C aircraft that is damaged beyond economical repair.

In order to ensure maximum versatility and effectiveness of current and future weapon systems, our modernization strategy will focus on those areas that we deem most critical. For example, we have minimized reductions—and in some cases, we even increased our investments—in our top acquisition priorities such as the KC-46A aerial refueling tanker; our variant of the Joint Strike Fighter, the F-35A; the Long-Range Strike family of systems; Space-Based Infrared System; Advanced Extremely-High Frequency and GPS-III satellite systems; and remotely-piloted



aircraft. Overall, this has meant slowing and, in some cases, even terminating lower-priority programs such as C-130 avionics modernization and the Defense Weather Satellite System.

The other critical element of force structure is, of course, personnel—adjustments for which naturally follow the changes in the aircraft numbers that I just described. Therefore, personnel reductions, however painful, will be necessary, on the order of 10,000 active, Guard, and reserve Airmen. But the rub is not only in sheer numbers; it is also in retaining the proper active-to-reserve component ratio. There is no doubt—absolutely none—that our investments in the reserve components were, and remain, smart investments. Through the creation of active, Guard, and reserve associations, we have integrated our collective capabilities in all major Air Force mission areas, with returns on these investments that quite simply have been invaluable. As a Total Force, we now are more ready, more sustainable, and more capable of meeting many surge and rotational requirements, such as those over the past decade.

But through two decades of military end strength and force structure reductions, the active-to-reserve ratio has shifted. In 1990, the reserve component represented 25 percent of the Total Force end strength. Today, it is 35 percent. And in the same period, reserve component aircraft ownership also increased, from 23 percent to 28 percent.

In relation to requirements, these numbers represent the reality that the active component has been cut to the point at which capacity cannot be reduced further without harmful effects to the benefits that I just mentioned: readiness, sustainability, and ability to surge and rotate at a sustainable tempo. Additionally, there are some functions for which the entire Total Force relies on the active component to address predominantly—for example: recruiting, training, experiencing, and equipping of the future force. So in order to sustain future Total Force capabilities and effectiveness, we must restore and maintain an appropriate active-reserve balance that is consistent with current realities and likely future trends.



It therefore follows that the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve were necessarily involved in all analyses and decisions affecting the Total Force. Together, we made the tough calls—admittedly, not always with complete unanimity—to ensure that the Total Force remains viable to fulfill the surge and rotational requirements of the new strategic guidance; to ensure that the active component retained the recruiting, training, and experiential base to sustain the Total Force; and to ensure that the reserve component remains relevant and engaged in both enduring and evolving missions. I stand by what the chief of the Air Force Reserve, Charlie Stenner; the director of the Air National Guard, Bud Wyatt; and I wrote last week in an *Air Force Times* op-ed piece: that the active component, Guard, and Reserve have worked and will continue to work closely together in charting the Total Force’s future.

Even more important than force structure alone is our readiness. Already, we have assumed risk that we deem acceptable and manageable, with a strategy for weapon system and facilities sustainment and modernization that best avoids a hollow force. A 487-billion-dollar cut in defense spending over 10 years is something for which the Defense Department has been planning, and is reflected in the new strategic guidance. We have no illusions about the road ahead being easy, but we are confident that it will be manageable.

Further reductions, however, could very well become untenable. At a minimum, such reductions would send us back to the drawing board, particularly if the cuts are executed across the board and not with respect to the new defense strategy. In the end, as Secretary Panetta has been saying since he took office, any further “salami-slicing” of the budget beyond the 500-some-billion dollars in cuts for which we have been planning will have severe impacts on our ability to maintain our force structure, readiness, and ultimately, our combat effectiveness.

## Conclusion

In any foreseeable circumstance, the road ahead will be fraught with challenges. As an Air Force, we are focused on maintaining an agile, flexible, and effective force that remains prepared to defend America and her interests, across a wide range of contingencies.



It is worth noting that although we have withdrawn ground forces from Iraq, and continue to draw down in similar fashion in Afghanistan, we should expect that Air Force presence will remain to a significant degree, long after significant U.S. ground presence has diminished in the region.

In fact, historically, as land forces withdraw from active combat, the relative requirement for airpower typically increases. So when our unmatched Joint team fought a brilliant and decisive campaign in Operation DESERT STORM, for example, the land forces returned home weeks and months later. But America's Airmen continued flying in operations NORTHERN WATCH and SOUTHERN WATCH over Iraq for a dozen years afterwards, thereby maintaining America's toehold until ground troops were ordered back for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003.

This decades-long combat operation in the skies over Iraq demonstrates that American airpower is most certainly not a birthright. Rather, it is the result of the dedicated and unrelenting work of America's Airmen. So although we achieved a milestone this past December 17th—the first time in twenty-some years that your Air Force did not fly a mission over Iraq—some U.S. Airmen will remain to meet our Afghan and Iraqi partners' requests for airpower training and other operational support.

You can expect the highest level of energy, commitment, and professionalism as we proceed into the second decade of the new century. And you can expect Airmen who will continue to innovate, adapt, and do whatever is necessary to safeguard the hard-fought gains and lessons of the past 10 years of counterinsurgency operations, even while they remain vigilant for full-spectrum threats on the horizon—and even amidst intensifying budget pressures and resource constraints.

Again, I appreciate your time today, and more importantly, I am grateful for your continuing support for our Airmen, our Joint teammates, and their families. I will be happy to take your questions now. Thank you.