



The Enlisted Perspective

By CMSAF James A. Roy

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Airmen downrange doing a phenomenal job

During the Thanksgiving holiday and first week in December, I traveled throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and spent time with our Airmen “downrange.” Simply put, our Airmen are doing a phenomenal job across the CENTCOM AOR.

An example is the great work Airmen are performing as Air Advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan. These Airmen train and mentor Iraqi and Afghan forces, helping them build capacity so they’ll be able to take over security for their homeland. This is just one of several examples where Airmen readily accepted nontraditional wartime taskings and contributed even more to the CENTCOM mission.

Across the AOR, Airmen spoke candidly with me about their mission and brought up a variety of concerns in public and private meetings. Two that stand out are ensuring the Air Force is giving the proper amount of training to deploying Airmen and making sure the Air Force is doing the best job possible reintegrating Airmen to their home stations and families when they return from deployment. I assure you, I take these and other concerns seriously and will work with our Air Force senior leaders and the Air Staff to resolve issues. I also highlight these two issues so our commanders, officers in charge, chiefs, first sergeants and supervisors throughout the chain of command can take notice. There are no excuses for improper training or lack of care for our Airmen and families.

The Air Force and our sister services will face a changing mission in support of CENTCOM in 2010. The current plan calls for the removal of all our combat troops from Iraq by the end of 2011. However, as U.S. forces draw down in Iraq, we face escalating challenges in Afghanistan.

In a recent speech, President Obama announced 30,000 additional U.S. combat forces will deploy to Afghanistan in 2010. While military planners are still finalizing the structure, there’s no doubt our Air Force will play an even greater role in Afghanistan’s security and capacity to govern and protect itself. We can expect the expanded mission will bring even more traditional and joint expeditionary taskings. When CENTCOM calls upon our Air Force to contribute more, I fully trust our Airmen’s readiness to deploy and serve alongside joint and coalition forces. As our Chief of Staff, Gen. Schwartz, said, “the Air Force is ‘all in.’” Whether working in an Air Force, joint or coalition unit, Airmen will superbly accomplish their mission, regardless the task.

Since the era of the Army Air Corps, Airmanship has been essential to U.S. military power. As the airpower arm of the United States, we will continue to provide those irreplaceable Airmanship skills for the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for future conflicts.



James A. Roy
James A. Roy
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force