



THE AIR FORCE RESERVE VISION UPDATE



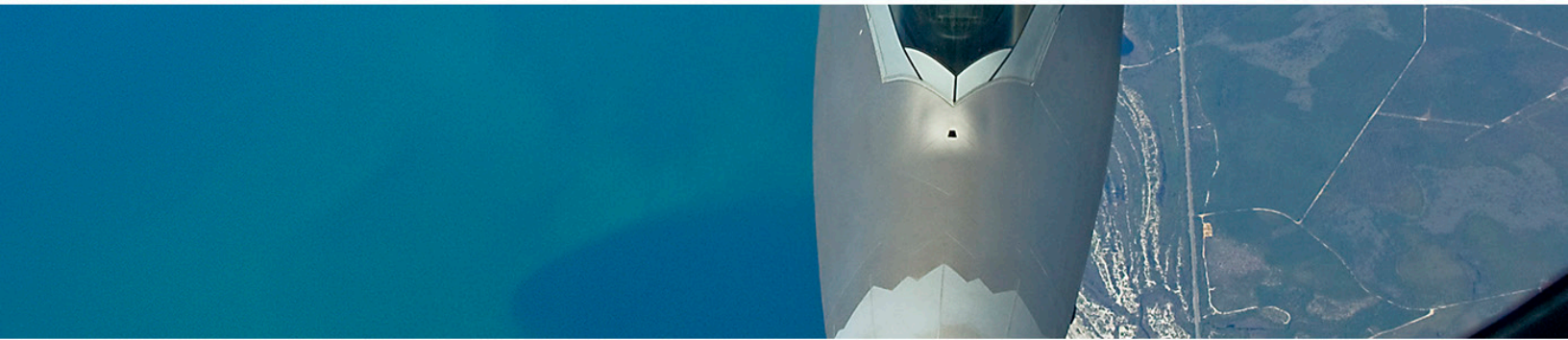
**A COMBAT-READY FORCE
2015**





AIR FORCE RESERVE VISION

The Air Force Reserve will remain an integrated, flexible and combat ready force providing accessible and sustainable capabilities as an Air Force Component supporting our National Security.



VISION UPDATE

“Now, at this pivotal moment, we continue to face serious challenges to our national security, even as we are working to shape the opportunities of tomorrow. Violent extremism and an evolving terrorist threat raise a persistent risk of attacks on America and our allies. Escalating challenges to cybersecurity, aggression by Russia, the accelerating impacts of climate change, and the outbreak of infectious diseases all give rise to anxieties about global security. We must be clear-eyed about these and other challenges and recognize the United States has a unique capability to mobilize and lead the international community to meet them.” – National Security Strategy, February 2015



PURPOSE

This Air Force Reserve (AFR) Vision Update is intended as a complement to our 2013 Vision and Guiding Principles. It builds on our Vision by incorporating key concepts from recent National Security Strategy (NSS) and Air Force (AF) Strategy documents, along with the report of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force (NCSAF) to provide an understanding of current strategic expectations for the AFR through what will be a period of rapid global change and uncertainty. This understanding will provide a clear vector for our AFR leadership team and supporting staff organizations to aid in developing future plans, programs, and force management actions.

BACKGROUND/STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The 2015 NSS reaffirmed an enduring set of national interests:

- The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners
- A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity
- Respect for universal values at home and around the world
- A rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges

The NSS acknowledges that a strong military is the bedrock of our national security as it plays a key role in deterring and defeating threats to these national interests. The strategy also provides specific direction for the military: “U.S. forces will continue to defend the homeland, conduct global counterterrorism operations, assure allies, and deter aggression through forward presence and engagement. If deterrence fails, U.S. forces will be ready to project power globally to defeat and deny aggression in multiple theaters.”

The AF's recently released Strategy documents (America's Air Force: A Call to the Future and USAF Strategic Master Plan) support this NSS and acknowledge that *The Air Force's ability to continue to adapt and respond faster than our potential adversaries is the greatest challenge we face over the next 30 years.* The AF strategy will position the service to counter this challenge by pursuing a path focused on the strategic imperatives of Agility and Inclusiveness. Agility incorporates the attributes of flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness that will serve as a counterweight to the uncertainty of the future and its associated rapid rate of change. Inclusiveness is achieved by strengthening the structure of the AF team, ensuring a character-based diverse culture, and developing robust partnerships outside the Air Force.

The Strategic Master Plan translates the AF's 30-year strategy into authoritative guidance, goals, and objectives that will ensure an agile AF and shape the future of airpower over the next 20 years

The AFR plays a key role in making the AF the agile and inclusive force described in the Strategic Master Plan. We provide flexibility through our ability to vary reservist participation rates based on demand – we are not a full time force but we can participate full-time when needed. Thus, we provide an affordable hedge against future uncertainty. We enable the AF to adapt and respond to rapid change through assured access to a pool of 70,000+ members of the Selected Reserve that are trained and ready to the same level of capability but at a fraction of the cost of Active forces. We also have the capacity to expand the size of the AF over time through access to an additional 790,000 members from the Individual Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve – allowing the AF to essentially reverse the impact of some budget-driven force structure reductions in the event of a future crisis.

The AFR contributes to Air Force inclusiveness by maintaining a highly experienced and diverse workforce that has strong connections to the civil sector. We also provide diverse opportunities for AF personnel through organizational structures that include senior leader developmental opportunities through our management staff, unit, and individual drill and full-time-support programs.





The NCSAF report stated that *Increasing integration of Reserve, Guard, and Active Component Airmen at headquarters and units, and increasing the number of integrated or multi-component (“associate”) units will lead directly to improved processes as well as more effective and efficient employment of the Total Air Force.* While the AF agrees in principle and continues to strive toward greater integration as recommended in the report, we do not support recommendations to disestablish AFR organization structures and fully integrate the components. These recommendations do not sufficiently consider the complexity of managing the unique aspects of the different AF components or how the component organizations contribute to the strength of the three-component force. Our vision looking forward acknowledges the importance of continued integration, but tempers it based on experience and documented best practices.

LOOKING FORWARD

Enabling Daily Operational Capability, Strategic Depth and Surge Capacity

The AFR will play a critical role in achieving AF strategic imperatives in support of the NSS through the deliberate steps we take as an organization to organize, train, equip, manage, and generate our citizen airmen force. We will continue as an operational force making valuable day-to-day contributions, while also providing strategic depth and surge capacity to augment a wide range of Air Force capabilities as a hedge against uncertainty. The result will be an AF that is flexible, adaptable, and responsive to change and emerging threats, while affordable in a tight budget environment.

To assure flexibility for the future, we must plan for sustainable and managed access to AFR forces for daily operations to ensure the AF can continue to leverage the comparative advantages of the AFR in the coming decade of severely constrained budgets. The AFR must also develop cost effective force structure plans that achieve the best balance among costs, operational capability, strategic depth, and surge capacity.

Effective daily operational capability is influenced by component roles and missions. Continuing missions with predictable support requirements are well suited to daily AFR operations as they allow for predictable, long term planning for participation that enables reservists' home and civilian work balance. We can support a wide range of other types of missions, but we must be realistic about our ability to assure and sustain participation. The AFR High Confidence Model (HCM) accounts for these variables and will continue to guide our planning efforts.

Providing greater oversight and management authority to the AFR for the Military Personnel Appropriation funding needed to accomplish these missions is also an important and necessary step, as it will assure a more efficient and sustainable utilization of mission essential resources.

In each mission area, AFR forces should be planned and managed to maintain a sustainable mobilized operational capability with assured access to these forces within established mobilization-to-dwell constraints. Planning for assured access to this capability will require an appropriate mobilization authority, but history demonstrates that volunteerism can and should be employed to the maximum extent feasible in execution in order to sustain force participation over the long term.

Basing and infrastructure models for AFR forces must be planned and managed consistent with recruiting demographics and civilian employment patterns, and we will continue to support integration of component organizations where it makes sense from a balanced business case and military capability basis. Where possible, we should share facilities with other AF components or other service forces to create greater infrastructure efficiency. Component integration will also be enabled by co-location of similar mission forces in shared facilities and should be considered where reserve recruiting and civilian job opportunities are available.

Assuring Future Relevance

It is important that we remain committed to explaining the AF position on the NCSAF recommendations to integrate AFR and active component organizations. Our leadership and staff





must understand and communicate the importance of integration. But, they must also communicate the value of retaining individual component identities and leadership opportunities along with the efficiencies gained through our enterprise-wide management and oversight of critical AFR resources and capabilities. We will retain separate component ADCON structures and leadership opportunities in these integrated organizations and will base our decisions on analysis of documented lessons-learned. This must be accomplished while avoiding the trap of responding to external pressure to implement untested recommendations that could jeopardize the future readiness of the force. Our AFRC centralized management headquarters structure provides a manpower-efficient approach to supporting multiple mission-focused AF major commands as well as management headquarters staffs across the Department of Defense. We must ensure that initiatives to change this structure are fully informed about the value of our organizations to support and sustain participation by our unique dual status (civilian/military) reservists.

Ensuring a robust AFR role in the successful organization, roll out, and basing of important new systems like the KC-46 and the F-35 will be essential to the future strength of the AF. These systems will offer new opportunities to test innovative organization structures and operating concepts, and the AFR must be proactive in developing and implementing new ideas. With continued severe fiscal constraints on the foreseeable horizon, the importance of the AFR in enabling conversion to these new systems will become critical, and we must play a key role in the process.

The AFR must also proactively pursue modernization options to ensure the viability of some legacy systems in order to adapt to budget realities, while continuing to provide a hedge against uncertainty. Thus, we will need to revitalize our engagement with the Lead Commands, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress to secure support and funding for AFR modernization initiatives in AF appropriations as well as the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation. This will ensure our legacy systems are able to operationally integrate with the newest AF systems and remain viable well into the future.



SUMMARY

Increased reliance on the AFR can be especially beneficial to the AF in an uncertain geopolitical environment and challenging budgetary climate. To ensure continuing value, it is of the utmost importance that the AFR institutionalizes the lessons learned over the past decades as we prepare to respond to an even more challenging future.

While not presuming to predict the future, it is evident that the AFR must plan and structure the force to ensure flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness. We must plan to contribute needed capabilities in a manner that is responsive to immediate operational needs while sustainable to support an uncertain future and possible protracted engagement. We must also manage our forces, not only conscious of our obligations to individuals, families and employers, but also with the recognition that access to our capabilities must remain assured to fully support the AF in the challenging days ahead.

