

## **The State of the Force - 2006**

*Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne*

*Remarks at the Air Force Association Symposium, Orlando, Fla., Feb. 2, 2006*

This is really a wonderful opportunity to be among friends and supporters of the great men and women of the Air Force who are absolutely dedicated to fighting the global war on terror which is our number one goal.

Your theme is Interdependence. [General Moseley] and I live that every day as we together lead our Air Force into an ever-better future. The Air Force is still pushing the boundaries, as did Billy Mitchell and even Chennault. We stand in awe of the Challenger crew from 20 years ago who made the ultimate sacrifice, pushing against the frontiers of technology. Then we gather up our courage to develop supercruise for the F-22A and we dream of more.

This is our Air Force, and you should be proud of where we have been and I daresay prouder of where we are going. I feel confident saying that because the leadership that was delivered to General Moseley and myself is a team fresh into global reach and global power; a team that is experiencing the majesty of global surveillance and global vigilance; a team that is prepared for the challenge that our mission statement asks; delivers sovereign options on behalf of the United States and its global interests, fly and fight in air and space and cyberspace.

This is that leadership team that has presented us the force that we have to work with -- creative, innovative, adoptive and flexible.

The Air Force Association's unwavering support of our brave men and women is always appreciated. You understand better than any other how important it is that our troops know that their nation supports them and that her citizens realize the sacrifices that they make every day to provide the rest of us peace of mind.

I thank you for making interdependency your theme this year. The idea of interdependency is causing us to think about the role that we have today and the role that we will play tomorrow.

I sometimes think that the Air Force plays its role so well that it becomes an assumption of the plan. While it is a precedent for action, we perform the role, again, so well, that people forget that they need to in fact resource it.

Two examples are global reach and air dominance. They have been hard earned and they need to be nurtured, not assumed. Interdependency must be real. It cannot be just words we whisper to each other at staff meeting and around water coolers or here in the display area. Interdependency accurately captures how small unit joint forces fight right now, right today. It has become a part of who we are.

It does, however need discussion and translation so as not to detract from a single mission focus of a Trident submarine, or the vigilance of those running the Minuteman Missile, or the joint nature of a long range strike bomber. As we describe the features of the Quadrennial Defense Review that will be released next week we must lay to rest any assumptions that the nation's defenders have been relieved of the charge laid down in the Preamble of the Constitution. We must still provide for the common defense.

You will find in the QDR that we remain responsible for the entirety of the spectrum of warfare and that one spectrum of warfare has been highlighted and that is asymmetric, cross-border threat, with its own global reach.

This immediate challenge that we face is how to bring all of our forces to bear on the problem to extract the best solution for the right application. I would ask this forum to consider the problem from inside of the warfighter commander's brain. The move to more jointness, to this full interdependency, will be a seismic shift in the way we define our operations of the future.

Interdependency is the transparent, horizontal integration of the Air Force among itself, within the other services, among coalition partners, and our allies. We must realize that these changes will push improvement in all of the missions by eliminating duplication, emphasizing persistent situation awareness across service boundaries. These changes will also pave the way for sharing information from strategic to tactical as the best means of achieving the desired outcome -- a stronger defense for America.

Before I get too far into the details, let me step back for a moment and give you the framework as I see it for the whole interdependency discussion. We must recognize that everything, every requirement, every weapon system, and ultimately every dollar, everything we do in the future will be colored by the stark fact that today, right now, our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen are engaged in a bloody fight with a deadly enemy.

This is an enemy that flies no flag, defends no borders, and has no standing army. They intend to fight for as long as it takes for them to create victory or for us to lose our will.

As the QDR heads over to Congress with the 2007 budget next week, it is important to understand how the Air Force and the entire department are shifting across this entire spectrum of defense which we are charged with.

This is the first Quadrennial Defense Review that is written in wartime, which means we had the ability to minimize the traditional gaps found in the theory to practice application. It is not some preeminent edict that only captures a snapshot in time, divorced from operational realities. Instead it's a key element in directing strategic policy.

The Quadrennial Defense Review builds options for the President rather than focusing on a force structure to fight a specific country or one type of threat.

In our Air Force mission we refer to sovereign options to build the national emphasis of the Air Force mission. What this means in practical terms is that we must join the entirety of the Department of Defense as it shifts from the garrison forces of threat-based planning to the agile and adaptive expeditionary forces of a capabilities-based planning character.

The character and capability of potential U.S. adversaries are increasingly uncertain, growing and changing as both state and non-state actors acquire advanced technology and weapons of mass destruction. Instead of one size fits all deterrent posture, we'll have tailored deterrence to maximize the President's options when dealing with near peer competitors, rogue powers or terrorists and their networks. In other words we're tailoring our forces through the Quadrennial Defense Review to have the capability to respond to contingencies that range from humanitarian and disaster relief and response to irregular, asymmetric operations, all the while simultaneously shifting from bulky industrial age forces to speedy, information age stretched forces.

It is these overlaps that make it imperative that we have the authority to manage our manpower and our fleet. We have highlighted this in the Air Force total force integration plan where we ferreted out the interdependencies between Active, Reserve and the Air National Guard so we can identify where in fact we might have and take advantage of duplicate applications.

Another way to move quickly and efficiently towards interdependency is to embrace knowledge

ennoblement at all levels. Let me highlight some of the shifts that knowledge enablement has allowed for the Joint Force and why it would appear that our mission has expanded to include cyberspace, an area wherein we have actually been resident for some time.

From the Combined Operation Center at al Udeid the Air Force controls all aspects of air operations for both Afghanistan and Iraq. It is the epicenter of our technological advances and a showcase of our shift from scheduled air offensive against massed enemies and fixed sites to on-call aircraft, ready to strike time sensitive fleeting targets on this fluid and asymmetric battlefield.

The jaw-dropping capabilities of this one of a kind facility provides a joint force, are made possible due to one dominant technology and that is cyberspace, assisted by another, precision, navigation and timing, to give us strike forces against time sensitive and fleeting targets.

Whether it's Predators flown from half a world away or beaming down of a real-time image from the advanced targeting pod to a ROVER laptop that the ground commander can see the same site picture as our aircraft commander -- the Air Force is in fact heavily invested in cyberspace.

This Remote Operations Video Enhanced Receiver, or ROVER, is an Air Force development to assist our tactical air control personnel and is a fine example from our shift from intelligence gathering and handling to intelligence distribution in near real time.

For those not familiar, our Airmen are winning Silver Stars. Airmen like Staff Sgt. Matt Liner who supported Army Special Forces in Afghanistan; and Staff Sgt. Travis Crosby who served alongside the 2nd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, to name just two. They are fully integrated with our Army as Tactical Air Controllers using this ROVER system. This system provides situation awareness to ground commanders, highlighting the options they have to make the mission a success. The options could well be joint fires from coalition forces, air, or naval power. These are all focus areas for the Quadrennial Defense Review that are reflected in the Air Force plan and our leveraging of cyberspace and joint forces.

These plans help us as we think forward and anticipate where our enemies, unfettered by the traditional constraints of distance, space, time, and funding, could strike us anonymously and lethally. Cyberspace is an important component of our plan. It is national boundaries and social/political divides are minimal barriers to operations and anyone can become a peer competitor with the United States in this arena.

We already have many Airmen dedicated to cyber war but their training and organization has up to now been a little bit ad hoc. The technologies that create and support cyberspace evolve so rapidly that our laws, conventions and doctrine lag just a little bit behind.

We are now pressing forward with developing plans to try to bring these together and enhance force presentation on behalf of Strategic Command and the joint force. This is an area where you and the Air Force Association can assist us to yield a different and a better future.

The Air Force has developed sovereign options for our nation to be used by the President that include the widest variety of joint military scenarios that we can support. From diplomacy through deterrence, then domination by kinetic force or humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Devising these options is no small task. It is in fact our life's work because as we all know, we all prefer not to go to war if we can devise some options that would prohibit us from doing that, but if went we want to make sure that we have no peer and that our kinetic options are incredibly dominant.

The Quadrennial Defense Review recognizes that we need even more options as calls on our military shift from direct military force of major combat operations towards our ability to provide stability, reconstruction and transition to governance, as well as humanitarian relief. Only by becoming agile, responsive, and adaptive can we ensure that all options are on the table when duty calls.

It is the history of our Air Force that we never can fall below the first category of readiness so that when duty calls we can respond wherever in the world it is. Once described as global reach, global power, global vigilance, this is the heritage with which we push the boundaries.

Air and space dominance are the first and essential enduring requirements of successful joint and coalition operations. This dominance is the asymmetric advantage enjoyed by the U.S. joint forces for more than 50 years. It gives the Joint Force Commander freedom from attack and freedom to attack. It also provides the Joint Force Commander with relief from interruption in the case of any humanitarian mission. We must continue to aggressively invest in this core competency and vigorously maintain our asymmetric superiority.

It is the Air Force that assists the Army with continual resupply and troop rotations via airlift. Our C-5s and C-17s deliver from afar and our C-130s reduce the need, number and frequency of Army ground convoys traveling with the most dangerous roads in Iraq.

It is the Air Force that provides combat search and rescue to personnel from all services. We send well-trained medical crews and aircraft to expeditiously aerovac injured Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines to proper medical facilities.

The two ABC news people that were just evacuated from Iraq experienced this level of sophisticated medical care firsthand when they were returned stateside within 48 hours of their accident and the interruption of their mission via an IED. A dramatic leap in the process of getting the injured from the battlefield to a U.S. hospital which used to take almost 45 days in previous conflicts.

It is Air Force refuelers that not only keep Air Force aircraft aloft but extend the combat range of Navy F-18s and the Army and Marine helicopters alike. It is Air Force F-16s and A-10s that protect ground convoys by providing close air support not only to our own troops but also to our friends and our allies.

As you can see, our efforts today define interdependence for the joint warfight. It reminds us of how far we have come from Desert Storm when it was a struggle to deconflict airspace and ground combat space as well.

We not only define interdependence in the air, we're also defining it in space and we're defining it in the ground. As ground forces become leaner and seek to increase their agility and their speed they will rely increasingly on air and space power to not only provide fires, but to move them through the battlespace.

Even a cursory look, users of reconnaissance, communications and global positioning systems will tell you that space power is inherently joint. Our space-based communication systems are as well.

Global vigilance is enhanced by Air Force space technologies in all of the spectrums. It doesn't matter whether your mission is strike, reconnaissance, search and rescue, or just combat patrol, you need precise navigation information. Whether on land, at sea, or airborne, the joint force depends upon space capability to get them there, keep them aware of their location, and then get them home safely.

Having now provided just a little bit of insight into the Quadrennial Defense Review and some of the fundamental shifts of the Quadrennial Defense Review, albeit from an Air Force perspective, let me dwell for a moment on our Airmen. They're the ones who are going to carry out the grand plans.

I cannot tell you how impressed I am with the eagerness and adaptability of these young men and women. Let me say that our team personifies interdependence. I have no doubt that they will implement our new plans in a very seamless fashion across the total force.

To show you how adaptable they already are, in early 2005 Air Force security forces were assigned in conjunction with the Army a sector outside a base in Iraq to patrol and clear of insurgent operations. Our innovative Airmen were exceedingly able to meet the challenge they faced by using technologies that they actually imported into that sector to both simplify and accomplish the mission in a dramatically different way using less forces more efficiently.

Interdependence is inherent in our Battlefield Airman specialty which now has DOD-certified Joint Terminal Attack Controllers who can direct the action of any combat aircraft engaged in close air support with troops regardless of the service the aircraft and crew are from. This action was really all brand new and really caused by the ability to communicate directly with our pilots.

The Air Force is also fully partnered with the Army and Marine Corps units who are running convoys throughout Iraq. Do you know we have more than 1,000 transportation, security forces and medical Airmen trained to support these convoy missions? Just ask Capt. Richard Pike or Technical Sgt. David Fried or any of the other Airmen with the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron. That squadron has driven more than four million miles in convoy operations in the last two years.

While in Iraq I also toured an operation called Bob's Up-Armor Facility on Balad Air Base. Bob was a senior NCO Reservist who got together with other senior NCOs, who saw the need to up-armor trucks that were used for convoys. They adapted their skills immediately to that mission and began to attract the attention of truck manufacturers who sent them new material to try on the trucks and took their revision of drawings right back into their original equipment manufacturers.

As they tested these kits for fit and function Bob was planning for the day when he could go out of business and that resupply would provide armor originally equipped. He has eventually achieved that goal.

Just one more illustration for you to show where we are headed. I was in the Predator control station, also in Balad, and a young lieutenant and senior Airman with only 18 months of experience was beside him running the sensor. In the middle was a computer with six chatrooms on the screen. This in addition to the normal air control and situation screens you would find in front of any pilot. The chatroom occupants ranged from the Combined Air Operations Center to the ground forces, to the reachback crew that would take this bird from combat to Nellis, I was amazed at how easily they navigated all this new technology, kept up with all the chatrooms and reams of information that were flowing in. These knowledge-enabled Airmen of today use these unmanned air vehicles as if they've been around for 20 years -- again, adaptive, flexible, innovative and creative.

We saw more wonderful lessons from the miracle of aero medical evacuation, to the 22-hour missions that our bombers fly to provide on-call and precise airstrikes, and cooperative searches with fighters as the sensors and surveillance platforms. But no lesson is more important in this

long war than force management and making sure that our Airmen are taken care of, both professionally and personally. Airmen are the sum and substance of what we are as an Air Force. We remain focused on caring for and developing our Airmen -- active, Guard and Reserve -- as our most valuable resource. If we maintain our commitment to them they can continue to meet the nation's commitment today while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow.

With that as an interlude, let me now provide you a look at our near term Air Force future, at what our vision is for the next few years as we laid it out in the budget for 2007 and the Future Year Defense Plan. This is about transformation, taking advantage of modern management techniques, of the reliability that we have engineered into our products, of the maintainability that we have done, of the communications that are provided to us by the internet and the knowledge that flows both from expert systems that allows reachback and that allows fewer people on-site, improving agility, reducing footprint, making our Air Force far more flexible.

If you're looking for transformation, look no farther than the Air Force vision. We're proud of our planners who have truly thought their way through this and are proud of our executive team who are stretched all around the globe, though they are here today, and who are rallying to achieve the greatest integrated Air Force we can compile. We are compelled to do it quickly and smoothly and to emerge with an Air Force equipped and ready for the joint fight any where and any time.

In the early 1980s when the development of the F-18, the F-16, and the F-15 had resulted in phenomenal military utility the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, John Foster, wanted more. He asked that we set a goal for stealth, speed and precision, the sum and synergy to make a quantum leap in air dominance.

Precision was enabled in the mid '90s with the Global Positioning System constellation. Stealth with the B-2 and the F-117. But it all comes together in the fifth generation fighter set, the F-22 and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. These multi-mission, multi-role fighters will make us realize what was once an old expression that we used to describe the F-16 to our international customers. Buy a fighter, get an Air Force.

But we need your help. I am here to tell you I don't know how many fifth-generation fighters the Air Force needs and the United States needs. Some of you may have a better idea than I do. But here is something that I do know. We should not shut down our only fifth generation fighter line before we get a firm hold on the next fifth generation fighter. The rule of wing walking applies. Providing even a hint of moderating our goal to dominate air is the kind of encouragement that our enemies don't need.

With that in mind and for the comptrollers, the former programmers and planners, let's take a look at how we're going to get six pounds into a proverbial five-pound sack.

Our plan starts with taking full advantage of some heritage strategies that have evolved and are standing us in great stead. We're reorganizing via total force integration. One of the first big indicators was the formation of the first Guard associate unit and for the first time putting a front-line fighter in that unit. We're learning all over again that integrating active, Guard and Reserve units generate efficiency by sharing resources, reducing duplication of effort, and in some cases reducing the number of personnel required to perform a task. We're applying this to weapon systems. The F-22A and the coming F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. These are and will be more reliable than their predecessors and they will have totally different maintenance schedules.

Because of the expected mission capability rate we are increasing the crew ratio and testing what exactly does constitute a squadron. This is also happening in other areas.

We're taking advantage of the just in time delivery system to reduce on-site storage as well as the people who not only manage but guard the on-site storage.

We have looked at some of our stressed career fields and surprisingly find that some are being rendered obsolete due to the introduction of brand new technologies. These career fields need to be redesigned and their mission upgraded to provide our Airmen with challenging careers.

We've looked at the depots and found they have not just gotten better, but by reducing the number of C-17s as an example in the queue, they have essentially provided to our Air Force additional aircraft that used to be called hangar queens. Modern management at Ramstein (Air Base, Germany) and other aerial ports have kept more planes in the sky than on the ground and effectively acquiring more aircraft through increased utilization at the same fleet size.

The end result is the same as if we had added to our production rate. This success, however, comes with a caution and that is the wear out factor. We need, and the fine fleet has responded, more flying hours than we had planned right now. We recognize, however, that this comes with a caution.

The same thing is going on in the world of tankers. I have asked General (Duncan J.) McNabb (Commander, Air Mobility Command) to look into high speed pumps to both refuel and to tank. I was impressed with what Ramstein had done in this area which essentially uses the same pit stop mentality as NASCAR does to keep the car on the track and out of the pit during a race.

We have taken one of our Air Force goals to foster Lean and six Sigma processes across the Air Force. The team has rolled out Air Force Smart Operations 21 which will affect the entire Air Force and some joint operations as well. Let me highlight one of our Airmen who was managing the passenger terminal at al-Udeid. He discovered that it in fact was the gateway from the states to Iraq and Afghanistan. He noticed that the incoming troops all carried huge A bags, B bags, and C bags, where the C bags were the chemical suits, each in their own way weighing 70 to 80 pounds. Then he noticed that outgoing troops carried the same bags. He suggested that the outbound troops store the bags and that the incoming troops pick them up. As you can imagine in the case of chemical suits, they had never even been unpacked. This simple suggestion saved reportedly \$51 million in outsize and oversize luggage charges; because these young men and women were carrying these bags all the way back to places that did not have an international airfield, so they were essentially getting charged two and three times for checking the same luggage.

By following the guidelines of Smart Operations 21, we can get more suggestions like this. We are trying to garner, process efficiencies and eliminating unnecessary work to free up our warfighters for the more important jobs. Our Air Force is working to get the right mix of officer and enlisted Airmen so we have the right person in the right job at the right time.

We have forecast the resources saved throughout the active, the Reserve and the Air Guard forces as well as our civilian and contractor services spending. We understand that in every case all of these people are volunteers and are today working for a better Air Force. We will treat them with great respect as we reshape our force structure because we value their talent and their contribution.

We will also be asking for slight changes in the law because we find we can use our Guard to a far greater extent than we might today. We want to be integrated.

We want our Guard and Reserve to be allowed to do more of the Active mission as we stand up more associate and active associate squadrons. This has the added benefit of helping our Air Force cope with the full cost of our all-volunteer force.

Much like we must manage the size and the specialties of all of our personnel. We must also be able to have management flexibility of our fleet. For example, we can realize efficiencies through the retirement of equipment that is becoming less militarily useful. Older aircraft that is kept in inventory beyond their military utility requires increasing costly maintenance and modifications to try to restore some of that marginal military utility. Sometimes this requires a complete overhaul which yields really a marginal gain overall.

Here's another area where we may need some assistance from those of you who are here today. We have apparently not told the story well as we have accumulated congressional restrictions or legislation on 839 aircraft, or 14.5 percent of our fleet, that I no longer have the right to manage but is being managed on my behalf. This means that we are actually unable to retire them. No other service faces such a binding and costly restriction. The freedom to manage our fleet is at the heart of our warfighting transformation. A smaller, more capable force sent to disable an enemy by penetrating or shriveling or destroying his target means fewer ISR assets, fewer tankers, fewer maintainers, and as we depart from some international airfields, fewer airfields. If we have our way, the resulting force structure will be more capable with a better mix of aircraft, resulting in 25 percent fewer fighter aircraft and 10 percent fewer total aircraft. Military utility, whether for humanitarian or combat usage on behalf of the joint force commander needs to be at the forefront of our planning, programming and acquisition.

As we continue down the path of modernization, our sights are not solely set on platforms alone. As I mentioned before, the Air Force continually had cutting edge technology that our risk-taking Airmen turned into today's tactics and today's procedures. We're also looking at how our headquarters are set up and seeing that our joint force is moving towards smaller, disbursed warfighting headquarters. As we adapt to this we'll be able to avoid duplicate staffing and to focus our efforts on fielding a more capable force of the right mix of our total force, our civilians and our contractors.

Another key component of our success is returning our acquisition process to its place of preeminence. This means not only staffing our acquisition workforce with experienced, accountable people who possess the proper expertise and level of integrity, but also putting in place ethical leadership and transparency in governance. Restoring acquisition preeminence is also critical to the resurgence of our space program. This vital area will shape the warfight for decades. It enables netcentricity, it enables information fusion, and it enables conversations with the tactical warfighter. Our nation is counting on us to deliver and protect capabilities for the warfighter. Commercial entities as well as private citizens.

So we are continuing to invest our talent and treasure in this, our continuing asymmetric advantage. Yes, we need some discipline. We're holding program managers and contractors more accountable. We are demanding proof that we can deliver what we are asked to deliver and for the agreed upon cost. In short, we're turning this mission area around. We need to manage this critical area for results. We'll demand better cost estimation as we move swiftly from concept to capability. We can no longer admire our own PowerPoint presentations while our programs languish and we must stop bemoaning our challenges and take action to speed up our acquisition cycle wherever we can.

One area that I am encouraged by is that Congress is re-engining elements of the 707 fleet. I am taking that to heart. And in the same vein as Smart Operations 21 asking for a holistic evaluation of our large aircraft fleet. A holistic evaluation means it's not just engines on engines, it's fleet on fleet, it's if I go the whole distance across the ocean can I not use a tanker? If I don't use a tanker do I need an airfield?

If changing engines allows for dramatic increases in range then, it will also change deployment

and expeditionary requirements, and ultimately we save quite a bit in infrastructure investment.

Well, this has been quite a tour from strategy to tactics with a request for assistance scattered throughout, and an interlude to brag about our incredible, brave, innovative and inventive total joint force Airmen.

I do have one little piece that you can think about as this conference progresses, so let me issue a challenge. I would like for everyone here, from military leaders to defense industry professionals, to open your mind to this new environment -- horizontally integrated, interdependent, and adaptive joint force. The Air Force continues to lead the way to spark change. Work with us to figure out what could be coming next down the tracks and how to tell the Air Force story in a way that reflects the efficiency and effectiveness across the total force.

This is what we need to live up to the imperative of the Constitution's Preamble and live up to our own mission -- defining and delivering sovereign options on behalf of the United States and its global interests. Flying, fighting in air, space and cyberspace.

I want to thank each and every one of you today for what you do for our Air Force. I want to thank you for having me today, and may God bless our great country.

Thank you.