



Welcome to the United States Air Force vision into the first quarter of the 21st Century. This vision is one of air and space power and covers all aspects of our Air Force - people, capabilities, and support structures. It charts a path into the next century as an Air Force team within a joint team.

While *Global Reach-Global Power* has served us well, extraordinary developments in the post-Cold War era have made it essential that we design a new strategic vision for the United States Air Force. As a result, we embarked on an intensive 18-month effort to develop a comprehensive vision to shape the nation's Air Force during the first quarter of the 21st Century. This endeavor culminated in a week-long meeting of senior Air Force leaders who agreed on the future direction of our Service.

***Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force* flows from the National Security Strategy and is our continuing commitment to provide America the air and space capabilities required to deter, fight and win. This vision is grounded in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concept of how we will fight in the early 21st Century - *Joint Vision 2010* . Moreover, it embodies our belief that in the 21st Century, the strategic instrument of choice will be air and space power.**

In the end, our success in implementing this vision will depend on the outstanding men and women who make up the nation's Air Force.



Ronald R. Fogleman
General, USAF
Chief of Staff



Sheila E. Widnall
Secretary of the Air Force



Air Force Mission

To defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space

Air Force Vision Statement

Air Force people building the world's most respected Air and Space force ... global power and reach for America

Air Force Core Competencies

Our nation's Air Force develops, trains, sustains and integrates the elements of air and space power to produce:

- [Air and space superiority](#)
- [Global attack](#)
- [Rapid global mobility](#)
- [Precision engagement](#)
- [Information superiority](#)
- [Agile combat support](#)

Speed, flexibility, and the global nature of its reach and perspective distinguish the Air Force's execution of its core competencies.

The Security Environment is Changing

Change in the world around us requires change in the Air Force.

The end of the Cold War swept away national security requirements that had appeared to be fixtures of the global security landscape. The Air Force anticipated the change and produced a vision for dealing with the post-Cold War world in the ground-breaking document, *Global Reach - Global Power*. This vision has guided the restructuring and modernization of the Air Force for the past six years. Because the change and uncertainty of the immediate post-Cold War era will endure, the Air Force must forge a new vision that will guide it into the 21st Century.

To enable the Air Force to meet the challenges of change, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force initiated a rigorous, systematic, multi-faceted examination of future demands on the Air Force as a member of America's joint military force. This revolutionary effort has had the deep involvement of Air Force leaders. It was guided by a Board of Directors consisting of senior military and civilian leaders, and chaired by the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff.

After extensive study and discussion, the Air Force senior leadership began to build this Air Force vision for the 21st Century. It was shaped by Joint Vision 2010, the new guidance published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Air Force leaders understood that their new strategic vision must meet the national security needs of the nation, and a national military strategy that has as its focus an increasingly U.S.-based contingency force. The Air Force also recognizes the emerging reality that in the 21st Century it will be possible to find, fix or track and target anything that moves on the surface of the earth.

The Security Environment Is Changing	
Yesterday	Tomorrow
Known adversaries and understood threats	Unpredictable opponents, unknown challenges
National survival at stake	Vital interests at risk
Homeland at risk of Soviet nuclear attack	Homeland at high risk of limited terrorist attacks
Humanitarian and "lesser" operations a sideline	Multiple humanitarian and "lesser" operations the norm
Limited access to "leading-edge" technologies	Global technological proliferation
Slow spread of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) weapons	Rapid spread of NBC weapons
Combat oriented to open plains, deserts	Conflict also likely in cities, jungles, and mountains
Extensive forward-basing structure	Project power increasingly from the U.S.
Information an adjunct to weapons	Information as a weapon/target

Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force is based on a new understanding of what air and space power mean to the nation - the ability to hit an adversary's strategic

centers of gravity directly as well as prevail at the operational and tactical levels of warfare. Global situational awareness, the ability to orchestrate military operations throughout a theater of operations and the ability to bring intense firepower to bear over global distances within hours to days, by its very existence, gives national leaders unprecedented leverage, and therefore advantages.

This strategic vision addresses the entire Air Force - people, capabilities and infrastructure - and charts the course of the Air Force into the first quarter of the 21st Century. The vision is the first step in the Air Force's back-to-the-present approach to long-range planning. Although this strategic vision document establishes overall direction, the Air Force will develop a Long-Range Plan to make the vision come true. Formulating a coherent, shared strategic vision is a critical step, but the real challenge is to make the vision actionable and implementable.

Today's Air Force

Explorations of the future must proceed from where the Air Force stands today: the world's most powerful air and space force. New technology and new operational concepts already offer an alternative to the kind of military operation that pits large numbers of young Americans against an adversary in brute, force-on-force conflicts. This new way of war leverages technologically superior U.S. military capabilities to achieve national objectives. It is a strategy of asymmetric force that applies U.S. advantages to strike directly at an adversary's ability to wage war. It offers potentially decisive capabilities to the Joint Force Commander to dominate the conduct of an adversary's operations across the spectrum of conflict.

But technology and tactics only go so far. Our core values, history, mission and the professionalism with which they are brought together are what make us the institution we are today. Our core values are simple and forthright:

Integrity first

Service before self

Excellence in all we do



These values are both a guide and source of great pride men and women of the Air Force team. As we plan for the future, it is important to remember that what makes us successful will not change. Quality people define the Air Force. From the flightline to the depot to the workstation to the on-orbit satellite repair instructions, it is the professional dedication of our people that makes the Air Force the premier air and space force to meet the nation's needs.

The men and women of the Air Force can build upon our tremendous heritage. They are the beneficiaries of an Air Force forged in World War II by the vision of airmen such as Henry H. (Hap) Arnold. We have the opportunity today, on the eve of the 21st Century, to build a new vision that will ensure the future vitality of our force. Our challenge is to dominate space as a unique dimension of military power. *Global Engagement* provides the strategic blueprint for meeting this challenge.

Planning Into the Next Century

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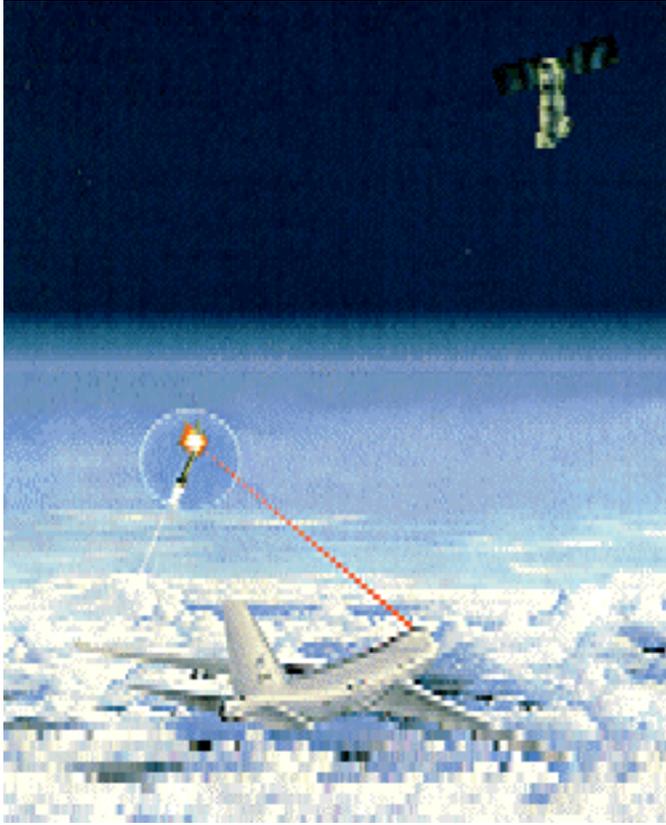
For all the transformation the world will undergo in the next 30 years, fundamental U.S. national security objectives will remain largely as they have been. For all the transformation the world will undergo in the next 30 years, fundamental U.S. national security objectives will remain largely as they have been for the past 220 years: to ensure our survival as a nation, secure the lives and property of our citizens, and protect our vital national interests.

Securing those vital interests under future conditions, however, will significantly change the demand for U.S. military capabilities into the 21st Century. In *Joint Vision 2010*, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has provided a common direction for our Services into the next century. The Chairman's vision calls for the capability to dominate an opponent across the range of military operations - Full Spectrum Dominance. The plan to achieve this goal comprises four operational concepts to guide future joint warfare development - Dominant Maneuver, Precision Engagement, Full-Dimensional Protection and Focused Logistics. In addition, Full Spectrum Dominance requires Information Superiority, the capability to collect, process, analyze and disseminate information while denying an adversary's ability to do the same.



Joint Vision 2010 - Guidance Toward 2025

Air and Space Power for the Next Century



Full Spectrum Dominance depends on the inherent strengths of modern air and space power - speed, global range, stealth, flexibility, precision, lethality, global/theater situational awareness and strategic perspective. Air and space power also contributes to the level of engagement and presence necessary to protect and promote U.S. national interests by augmenting those forces that are permanently based overseas with temporary or rotational deployments and power projection missions.

Ensuring that air and space power continues to make its unique contributions to the nation's Joint Team will take the Air Force through a transition of enormous importance. We are now transitioning from an *air* force into an *air and space* force on an evolutionary path to a *space and air* force. The threats to Americans and American forces from the use of space by adversaries are rising while our dependence on space assets is also increasing. The medium of space is one which cannot be ceded to our nation's adversaries. The Air Force must plan to prevail in the use of space.

Space is already inextricably linked to military operations on land, sea and in the air. Several key military functions are migrating to space: Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR); warning; position location; weapons guidance; communications; and, environmental monitoring. Operations that now focus on air, land and sea will ultimately evolve into space.

All the Services depend heavily on space assets to support their missions. The Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Space Command (USCINCSpace) is already tasked with the missions of space control and force application in support of the joint warfighter. The Air Force will sustain its stewardship of space and will fully integrate Air Force space capabilities in joint efforts to support the needs of the nation.

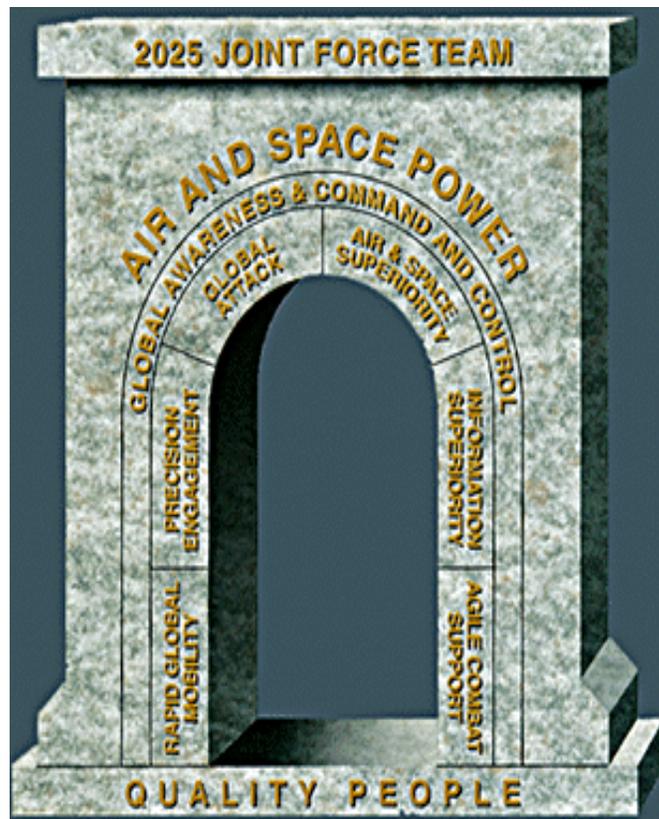
The Air Force recognizes that any further use of space will be driven by national policy, international events, threats moving through and from space, and threats to U.S. space assets. However, the nation will expect the Air Force to be prepared to defend U.S. interests in space when necessary.

Core Competencies

Our core competencies represent the combination of professional knowledge, airpower expertise, and technological know-how that, when applied, produces superior military capabilities. A particular core competency is not necessarily unique to the Air Force. Speed, flexibility, and the global nature of its reach and perspective distinguish the Air Force's execution of its core competencies.

The first quarter of the 21st Century will demand that the Joint Force Commander field robust, flexible capabilities to cope with a wide range of contingencies. Each military service must present to the combatant commander a set of relevant and complementary capabilities. This presentation allows the Joint Force Commander to consider all options available, and to tailor campaign plans to best meet the military objectives of the mission.

The Air Force contribution to the Joint Force Team is graphically depicted as an arch at left. It begins with a foundation of quality people. Air Force men and women carry out the core competencies of Air and Space Superiority, Global Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Precision Engagement, Information Superiority, and Agile Combat Support. These are represented as an arch because they are all mutually supporting and provide synergistic effects. These competencies are brought together by global awareness and command and control to provide air and space power to the Joint Force



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Within the Air Force, core competencies provide a bridge between doctrine and the acquisition and programming process. In the context of long-range planning, defining future core competencies provides strategic focus for the vision. Each core competency illuminates part of the strategic vision that will guide decisions and set the course toward the Air Force of the 21st Century. Our core competencies represent the combination of professional knowledge, airpower expertise, and technological know-how that, when applied, produces superior military capabilities. A particular core competency is not necessarily unique to the Air Force. Speed, flexibility, and the global nature of its reach and perspective distinguish the Air Force's execution of its core competencies.

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Air Force Commitment to Innovation

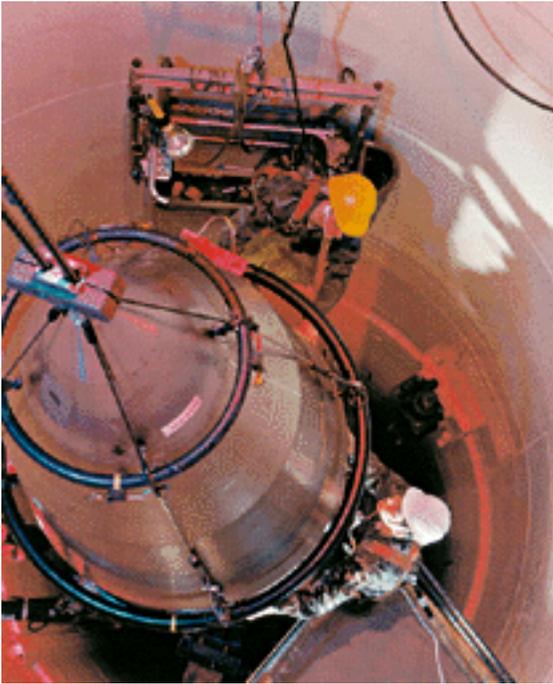
The key to ensuring today's Air Force core competencies will meet the challenge of tomorrow is *Innovation*. Innovation is part of our heritage as airmen. The Air Force was born of a new technology - manned powered flight. Innovation will enable the Air Force to evolve from an air force to an air and space force on its path toward space.

The Air Force is committed to a vigorous program of experimenting, testing, exercising and evaluating new operational concepts and systems for air and space power. It will provide additional emphasis in six areas of ongoing activity in Air Force centers of excellence. That will be accomplished with a series of focused battle laboratories for **space, air expeditionary forces, battle management, force protection, information warfare and unmanned aerial vehicles.**

These new battle labs will be aimed, both institutionally and operationally, at our core competencies. Creating focused battle labs will explore new ideas and foster innovative technologies that will improve the capabilities of our core competencies.

The rate of technological change has accelerated and the nation's future force must keep pace to maintain its military edge. We must reinvigorate the spirit of innovation and creativity that has long been the hallmark of the United States Air Force.

Air Force People



People are at the heart of the Air Force's military capability, and people will continue to be the most important element of the Air Force's success in capitalizing on change. The Air Force of tomorrow and beyond must encourage individuals to be comfortable with uncertainty and willing to make decisions with less than perfect information. Accordingly, our people must understand the doctrine, culture and competencies of the Air Force as a whole - in addition to mastering their own specialties. Emphasis on creating an Air Force environment that fosters responsiveness and innovation, and rewards adaptability and agility will be crucial as we move into the early part of the next century. Many things may change, but the Air Force of the first quarter of the 21st Century will continue to place a high priority on maintaining the high quality of its men and women, and on providing quality of life for Air Force members and their families.

The Total Force of the Future

One sign of change in the Air Force will be how the definition of the Air Force operator develops in the future. At its birth, all Air Force operators wore wings. Future definitions of operators will change as the Air Force changes. Moreover, all combat operations in the 21st Century will depend on real-time control and employment of information, further broadening the definition of the future operator. *In the future, any military or civilian member who is experienced in the employment and doctrine of air and space power will be considered an operator.*

The composition of the future Total Force will change as the nature of air and space power changes. As a result, the Air Force is committed to outsourcing and privatizing many functions now performed internally. The force will be smaller. Non-operational support functions will increasingly be performed by Air Force civilians or contractors. Most uniformed personnel will be operators and a greater percentage will be from the Reserve components.

To prepare for the changes ahead, the Air Force has reviewed, generally reaffirmed and initiated some adjustments to its career development patterns for its officers, enlisted and civilian force. To ensure its future leaders all share a full and common understanding of air and space operations, the Air Force decided to create a new Air and Space Basic Course. This course will focus on the history, doctrine, strategy and operational aspects of air and space power. The desired outcome is for each new officer and selected senior NCOs and civilians to have a thorough knowledge of the day-to-day capabilities of combined air and space

operations. Most officer graduates from this course will go directly to operational jobs as their first assignment before performing their functional specialty.

The Air Force will seek new opportunities to capitalize on the synergy of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve forces in an integrated TOTAL Force. In its effort to maximize and improve operational effectiveness and efficiency, the Air Force will explore additional opportunities for new Guard and Reserve missions as well as expanding the use of Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs). The Air Force's ability to rely upon and integrate its Reserve components is already a fundamental strength, one that will continue to play a major role for the nation in the next century.

A Force Grounded in Core Values

The ideals embodied in the Air Force core values are:

- Integrity first
- Service before self
- Excellence in all we do

They are universally prescriptive. Despite the uncertainty of the future, the Air Force can say with certainty that today and tomorrow, it must live up to these ideals or it cannot live up to its responsibilities. Our core values are fundamental and timeless in nature, and reach across the entire force. Our core values are values for service, values for life, and must be reflected in everything that we do.

A values-based Air Force is characterized by cohesive units, manned with people who exhibit loyalty, who want to belong, and who act in a manner consistent with Air Force core values, even under conditions of high stress. To ensure this values-based Air Force, three elements - education, leadership and accountability - provide a framework to establish the strongest imprint of shared Air Force core values. In the Air Force of tomorrow, as in the Air Force of today, these stated and practiced values must be identical.

The Air Force will continue to reinforce its core values in all aspects of its education and training. The goal is to provide one hundred percent of the Total Force with core values education and training continually throughout a career. The Air and Space Basic Course will also ensure that the Air Force's future leaders, military and civilian, have a common, shared foundation in core values, doctrine, and operations.

Key Elements of Air Force Infrastructure



Defining our future core competencies tells us what business the Air Force will be in as it enters the 21st Century. But the Air Force must change the way it does business if it is to meet the future demands for air and space power. Continuing pressure on resources will make increased efficiency and reduced infrastructure costs necessary for success.

The Air Force has long recognized the importance of responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars and will strive to achieve the highest standards for efficiency. Ensuring the nation has capabilities to hedge against unforeseen and multiple threats across the full spectrum of conflict puts a premium on efficiency. The real penalty for inefficiency is not just wasted dollars, but unmet demand for military capabilities.

Our warfighting activities will be designed for effectiveness and our support activities will be designed for efficiency. All support activities will be run more like businesses, using the "best practices" gleaned from top performers. Air Force personnel will focus on preparing for and conducting military operations - their competence - while support activities not deployed for combat will be performed by a robust civilian and competitive private sector. The Air Force is committed to the organizational and cultural change to make this vision a reality.

The Air Force will increase the efficiency of its modernization process through the focused exploitation of emerging information technologies and by accelerating its ongoing acquisition reform program. It also will strengthen the concept of integrated weapon system management by clarifying relationships between single-product managers, their customers and the depot and contracted activities that support them.

The Air Force is committed to the aggressive reduction of infrastructure costs. The role of commercial industry will be maximized to ensure "best-value practices" throughout the development and production process. These activities - research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E), and sustainment - will be consolidated into Centers of Excellence encompassing mission areas directly related to Air Force core competencies. The Air Force will also explore teaming with the other services to form Joint Centers of Excellence for RDT&E.

Inefficiency drains resources needed for the capabilities the nation needs from its future joint force team. The overlap and redundancy of test and evaluation facilities must be reduced

through streamlining, integration, outsourcing and privatization. New technologies, particularly in testing through modeling and simulation, must be exploited to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.

The Air Force's determination to become more efficient will also affect the composition of its future workforce. Its commitment to an aggressive program of civilianizing many combat support functions, as well as outsourcing and privatization, will push more support functions into the civilian workforce and, in many cases, into the private sector.

The Air Force believes that one of its most important attributes is a sense of community among its members and their families. Far more than simple "pride in the team," this factor builds the motivational identity and commitment that underlie our core values, career decisions, and combat capability. The excellence of our installations and Quality of Life standards contribute to this, and to the general well-being of the members of the Air Force family. The Air Force is rededicating itself to both maintaining this sense of community and finding new and more efficient ways of providing it.

Looking Back to the Present to Plan for a New Century

This document sets out a new Air Force strategic vision for the 21st Century. It provides a vision of the future and a path back to the present to guide today's planners. Following this path requires a revitalized and institutionalized long-range planning process.



The Long-Range Plan will identify those initial steps and transition decisions which are necessary to reach the goals outlined in this strategic vision document. Transition decisions are critical to formulating meaningful divestment and investment strategies, to making transitions from sunset to sunrise systems and capabilities, and to providing the milestones and feedback mechanisms that ensure accountability. The Long-Range Plan will further guide the Air Force's other planning and resource allocation processes.



Final Thoughts

Global Reach - Global Power prepared the Air Force to deal with the challenges of the transition era following the Cold War. *Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force* charts a course that will take the Service beyond this transitional period and into the future. It is a future in which dramatic changes wrought by technology will be the norm. It is also a future in which the core values of service, integrity and excellence will continue to sustain the men and women of the Air Force. Most importantly, the Air Force's devotion to air and space power will continue to provide the strategic perspective and rapid response the nation will demand as it enters the 21st Century.

Our Vision Statement remains: **Air Force people building the world's most respected air and space force...global power and reach for America.**

Core Values of the United States Air Force

Integrity First

Service Before Self

Excellence In All We Do