



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



The Contributions of America's Airmen

Airmen

This past Monday, the Secretary of Defense delivered an address at Maxwell AFB to the students of our Air War College and Air Command and Staff College. Initial press coverage of his remarks misrepresented the tone and content of his address. Whereas some press reports characterized Secretary Gates as making a singular critique about one Service's commitment to the Global War on Terror, his remarks were instead focused on the need for innovative thinking from all the Services.

As Secretary Gates himself explained: ". . . I think if you read the text of the speech, you'll see that it's not a dig at the Air Force at all. In fact, a significant part of the speech was full of praise at what the Air Force had done in the Middle East and Iraq and Afghanistan and the whole theater." Secretary Gates challenged his entire Department and the leaders of every Service "to think out of the box" in continuous pursuit of better ways to deliver what is needed for the joint force in harm's way. The Air Force is well suited for that innovative pursuit. Every Airman should take Secretary Gates' comments to heart and strive to find more and better ways for the Air Force to contribute to the War on Terror.

It is important for all Airmen to know Secretary Gates applauded Airmen for their significant contributions to the Long War, just as he has praised America's Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines. It is also important for Airmen to know Air Force contributions are making a difference, and that Airmen continue to do everything possible to support the Secretary of Defense's priorities. He has asked all Services to accelerate transformational initiatives like those in the Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Air Force is doing just that.

In short, Airmen are "all in" to fight today's war on global terrorism. From strategy to tactics, the Air Force has leaned far forward to deliver instruments of national power in a rapidly changing world. Every able-bodied Airman--Regular, Guard, and Reserve--is fully deployable. Indeed, Airmen have filled over 524,000 deployments since the war began. Today, 24,000 Airmen are delivering a full spectrum of air, space, and cyber power to the Joint Force Commanders conducting operations in USCENTCOM, every hour of every day.

Air Force engagement in CENTCOM's AOR is only the tip of the iceberg. About 200,000-plus Airmen are in direct support of Combatant Commanders around the clock and around the globe to provide all with critical air, space, and cyber capabilities. Airmen are in the most dangerous places on the planet tonight to protect America. Airmen have been vital to the success of the Joint team in this critical Global War on Terror, while at the same time providing the global strength and deterrence that keep our enemies at bay and our friends assured.

The Air Force was born of an innovative spirit and a willingness to question the status quo. Airmen are applying that spirit daily to address America's challenges. In sum, our Air Force is 'in the fight' to win, and is deterring any aggressor from doing us harm while we succeed in the Global War on Terror.

We are proud of the hard work that you ... America's Airmen ... undertake every day. Secretary Gates has challenged us to continue to honor our heritage of innovation. The Airmen of the United States Air Force will succeed in meeting his charge.




Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force


T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
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