



CHIEF's Sight Picture

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Air and Space Core Competencies

In his inaugural issue of the “Secretary’s Vector,” Dr. Roche described the process we used to identify and refine our institutional air and space core competencies. These competencies – *Developing Airmen*, *Technology-to-Warfighting*, and *Integrating Operations* – are not new. Rather, they are the unique institutional qualities inherent in everything we’ve done – and continue to do. This announcement represents our relentless pursuit of discovery and our commitment to provide America with the world’s greatest air and space force.

These core competencies lay at the heart of what truly makes our air and space force the powerful and unique team it is today, even more than what we now recognize as our distinctive capabilities of *Air and Space Superiority*, *Global Attack*, *Rapid Global Mobility*, *Precision Engagement*, *Information Superiority*, and *Agile Combat Support*. The significance of these distinctive capabilities endures and, together with our core values, serve to define the essence of who we are as airmen and will guide our continuing development as an air and space force. Our systems may change, our threats may vary, our tactics may evolve, and our people may come and go, but these three core competencies remain the constants that define our Air Force, and enable us to fight and win America’s wars.

Let me share with you my perspective on how these competencies translate into operations and effects.

Developing Airmen: The heart of combat capability

At no time in the history of modern warfare has a force been as well trained, well equipped, and highly motivated as our Air Force is today. From combat supporters on the ground around the world, to aircrews delivering troops and combat payloads across the globe, to space operators flying satellites through the outer reaches of space, our airmen personify the Air Force Vision of Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power. They are the linchpin that enables us to deliver worldwide strike, mobility, reconnaissance, and support.

The full spectrum of our air and space capabilities stems from the collective abilities and expeditionary mindset of our personnel. And in today’s world of swiftly flowing information and powerful technologies, every individual role in our Total Force – active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian – carries greatly increased significance. Just a few airmen on the ground in Afghanistan, steeped in expeditionary training and skilled in the application of air and space power, were critical to combat successes there.

Technology-to-warfighting: The tools of combat capability

Our Air Force has a proud legacy of continually bringing cutting-edge technological capabilities to bear to confront threats to our nation's security. This legacy started a century ago with the dawn of aviation. It continues today, as our wielding of air power pushes the limits of not only the sky, but of outer space and cyberspace. We combine the tremendous technological advancements of stealth, global communications connectivity, global positioning, and more, to put cursors on targets and steel on the enemy. It is our unique ability to apply various technologies in unison so effectively that allows us to translate our air and space power vision into decisive operational capability.

The Predator unmanned aerial vehicle is today's perfect example of this core competency in action. It combines the dynamics of manned aviation with the remote operation techniques of unmanned satellites and the information connectivity of networks into a single system capable not only of collecting and disseminating information, but of producing combat effects.

Integrating Operations: Maximizing combat capabilities

In the fast-paced combat environment of the 21st century, victory belongs to those who can most quickly collect intelligence, communicate information, and bring capabilities to bear against targets around the globe. Executing these complex tasks with accuracy, speed, and power requires the seamless integration of systems, activities, and expertise across all manned, unmanned, and space capabilities.

This is precisely what our Joint and Combined Air Operations Centers achieve. They effect a union of a myriad of capabilities and people into a synergistic whole – a center of integration pivotal to successful joint warfighting. The result – integrated operations – is our unique ability to conduct Predictive Battlespace Awareness and bring effects on the enemy at times and places of our choosing.

Our distinctive capabilities, which spring directly from these core competencies, will continue to be those vital areas of expertise we bring to any military operation or activity. We can achieve success in these six distinctive capabilities *only if* we're first successful in our three core competencies. Only then do we bring the decisive effects of air and space power into joint warfighting.

Our air and space force is powerful and unique. Powerful because, through these core competencies, it wields the ability to project power across the globe, whether for decisive combat effects or compassionate humanitarian aid. Unique because no potential adversary exists on the planet that is capable of equaling it in these core competencies and distinctive capabilities.

