



Air Force Association



Principles of Airpower

AFA Policy/Communications

Educate

Advocate

Support



Airpower

Airpower is America's trump card

It is essential in any application of force



- Born out of trench warfare, Airpower is unhindered by geography, terrain, time, and weather
- Airpower has affected the direction of national policies, the growth of industries, and the rapid advance of technology



Airpower

The 21st Century is the Second Century of the American air age.



- Airpower will continue to be a combat enabler permitting joint operations and a combat disabler damaging enemy forces
- Airpower has morphed to include the air, space and cyberspace domains
- Airpower can strike and surveil any target within hours; space power within seconds and cyberspace within milliseconds



Airpower

Airpower is the asymmetric force the battlefield in favor of US troops



- Airpower can quickly intervene over an entire theater, regardless of whether it is for strategic or tactical purposes.
- Can concurrently conduct different types of campaigns



Airpower

Airpower can be everywhere. Persistent. Lethal. Necessary.



- Airpower's speed and range allow it to strike targets across the entire depth and breadth of an enemy country
- Airpower presents an enemy with multiple crises that occur so quickly he cannot respond effectively to any of them



Airpower

Airpower can strike fear into the minds of America's enemies



- “Tanks and armor are not a big deal — the planes are the killers. I can handle everything but the jet fighters.” A recent conversation between Taliban insurgents



Airpower

Other services have air arms. But the Air Force is the only Service to provide full spectrum forces to the warfighter.



- A core competency is a complex combination of technology, manufacturing base, skilled manpower, training, organizational agility, doctrine and operational experience that allows the Air Force to do something of strategic importance extremely well.



Airpower

Airpower cannot be taken for granted. The demise of US airpower would be catastrophic to US security & prosperity.



- Airpower changes things by blurring the distinction between the strategic and tactical level
- The goal of the air commander is to maximize his intrinsic advantage by operating at the strategic level of war while forcing the enemy to fight at the tactical level.



Airpower

America must embrace its Air Force and its battle-won heritage.



- More Airmen were lost by 8th Air Force alone in World War II than US Marines lost in the entire war
- Desert Storm's 1000 hour campaign was unparalleled in the history of warfare
- More terrorists killed by Airpower than by any other means

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Airpower

Offense is the essence of air power



- The immensity and tracklessness of the sky allows one to strike from any direction
- Terrain masking, electronic measures, careful routing and stealth technology make it extremely difficult to anticipate and prepare for an air assault



Airpower

Air control can be established by superiority in numbers, by better employment, by better equipment, or by a combination of these factors



- Since the German attack on Poland in 1939, no country has won a war in the face of enemy air superiority. . . Conversely, no state has lost a war while it maintained air superiority



Airpower

Airpower can conduct parallel operations at all levels of war, simultaneously

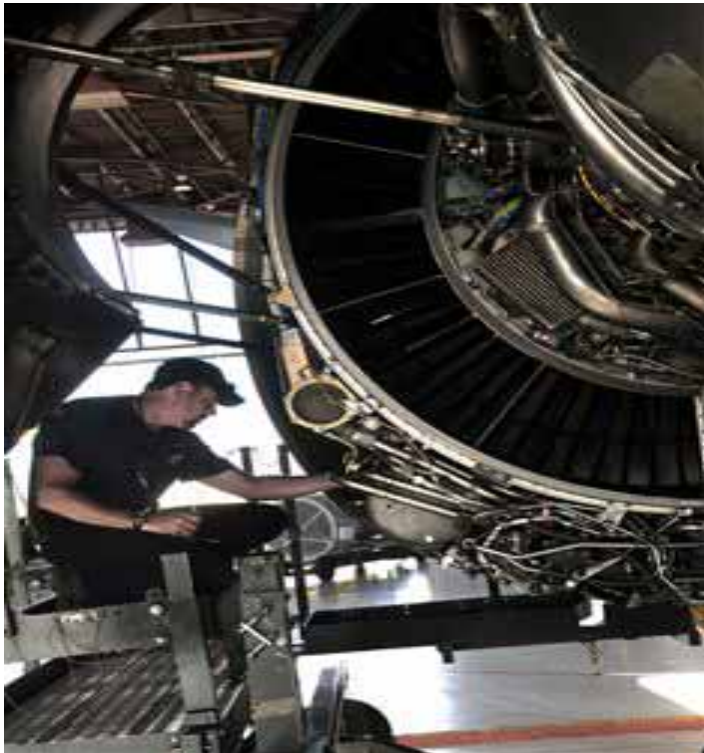


- Parallel operations occur when different campaigns, against different targets, and at different levels of war, are conducted simultaneously
- Parallel operations can also have parallel effects, presenting an enemy with multiple crises that occur so quickly he cannot respond effectively to any of them.



Airpower

Airpower essence includes not only military assets, but an aerospace industry and commercial aviation.



- The technology required to develop a first-rate military aircraft is enormous, complex and expensive. It is essential that government and business are partners in nurturing this capability
- The United States has often been in the forefront of emerging technologies--railroads, shipbuilding, automobiles, electronics and computers--only to later retreat from the field, leaving it to competitors. We cannot afford to do that in air, space and cyberspace.



Airpower

Airpower is targeting, targeting is intelligence, and intelligence is analyzing the effects of air operations



- Intelligence has become "a strategic resource" that may prove as valuable and influential in the post-industrial era as capital and labor have been in the industrial age.



Airpower

Precision air weapons have redefined the meaning of mass



- Targets are no longer massive, and neither are the aerial weapons used to neutralize them.
- Objectives can be threatened, and if necessary attacked, with little collateral damage or civilian casualties, at low cost and low risk, since few aircraft will be required.



Airpower

Airpower produces physical shock and psychological shock by dominating the fourth dimension--time.



- Airpower can similarly produce physical shock because of the enormous amount of firepower it can deliver in a concentrated area
- Conquest of time by airpower provides surprise, and surprise in turn affects the mind, causing confusion and disorientation.
- Speed and surprise can sometimes substitute for mass: if an enemy is unprepared physically or mentally for an attack, then force, rapidly and unexpectedly applied, can overwhelm him:



Airpower

Airpower's unique characteristics necessitate that it be centrally controlled by Airmen



- An airplane can deliver several tons of ordnance in a few minutes at a distance of hundreds of miles, and this requires an ability to think in operational and strategic level terms.
- Future conflicts may not have the overwhelming air assets available today. In such instances tough decisions regarding prioritization will have to be made by those who understand airpower...and those who can think in the strategic realm.

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