

**General William M. Fraser
Commander, Air Combat Command**

Air Warfare Symposium

19 February 2010

Moderator: Our final speaker is responsible for organizing, training, equipping and maintaining combat ready forces for rapid deployment and employment, ensuring strategic air defense forces are ready to meet the challenges of peace time air sovereignty and war time defense. A command pilot with over 4,000 hours. Welcome to the stage the Commander of Air Combat Command, General Will Fraser.

[Applause].

General Fraser: Thanks, I appreciate it.

This is it. You've lasted this long.

I think this is where I say go ahead and roll the video. How's that video coming? Oh, I forgot. We ain't got one. [Laughter].

Let me go ahead and have that first slide.

We ain't got one of them either. [Laughter].

These are tough budget times. [Laughter].

I want you to know, we didn't hold back when we transitioned and we gave our bombers over to Frank Klotz because he was obviously able to put a slide together. So that's pretty good.

It's great to be here and to be a part of this great forum. Sandy, I do appreciate the introduction. To Joe and Mike, thank you very much for all your hard work and for everything, really, that AFA does for our entire institution.

I do appreciate the fact that we've got some folks that have managed to hang around this long, to be a part of this great symposium. Lunch is going to be served here very shortly, if not already, so if you care to go ahead and partake, feel free. Beat the rush. Get out there ahead of your friends and colleagues. But I do want to

take just a few minutes to talk to you a little bit about ACC, about the CAF and what is going on.

You know, all of us here know that these are challenging times for our military. Our Air Force is indeed coping with operations around the globe. We're fighting an adaptable enemy who has challenged our traditional methods of warfare. We face this while continuing to organize, train and equip our forces with a declining budget and in an ever-changing environment as has been noted in the latest QDR.

One of the great challenges of our time is indeed winning today's fight while modernizing to prevail in future conflicts within our given resources. We have to tackle a declining budget, an aging fleet, and competing priorities for limited funds, all of which is impacting our people, our equipment, and our ability to train.

To succeed in delivering combat air power with a constrained force, we are having to make some tough decisions. Just as Secretary Donley said yesterday, make the most of the resources that are available.

With an unpredictable future, our choices must ensure that we retain our combat capabilities across the entire range of military operations. Overall these difficult but necessary decisions require us to prioritize, to take measured risk, and to remain agile yet with a smaller force.

To achieve this goal, ACC has set the following priorities to take care of our people, to win today's fight, to continue to prepare for tomorrow, and to modernize within the provided resources.

In short, this is where ACC is focused on delivering combat air power.

We tend to equate combat capability with our equipment, and it's not about the hardware. But in reality, it's about our people. We've heard many other speakers here over the last day and a half talk about our people. They are our most important resource. They're the ones who employ our equipment and deliver the combat capability that we so vitally need to defend our nation. It is imperative that we take care of our Airman, but it is also imperative that we take care of their families, and the stresses that we're seeing upon the families and their children. They are our future.

This is a top Air Force priority, as you've heard from our leadership, and it's also the number one priority within ACC. We are a nation at war and the demands placed on our people and their families are higher than ever. To alleviate the stress on our people and to maximize our ability to train and fight, we're going to optimize our resources gained through CAF restructuring.

This is a long term and a necessary solution to maintain combat capability while reducing stresses of multiple deployments. This stress is an enduring issue for our entire military. Chief Roy spoke yesterday of the pressures facing our Airmen and their families, and they're feeling even greater stresses because of the great job that our Airmen are doing we're in even higher demand. We heard that even from General Scaparrotti yesterday.

So we must stop dealing with these problems in a reactive manner. Instead, we need to adapt a proactive approach to strengthen our Airmen. In Air Combat Command we're taking action by leveraging lessons from others. We're going to leverage these lessons that we've learned from others in a holistic manner. We call that the Comprehensive Airman Fitness Program.

The goals of this program are to improve well being, strengthen personal readiness, and enhance the balance in our Airmen's lives in four key aspects. That is physical, mental, social, and spiritual. This is not just a new buzz word, the Comprehensive Airman Fitness Program. This is a key initiative to focus all of our programs and to continue to build upon them and then bring true synergy to improve total fitness before irrevocable damage occurs.

With a smaller force we must continue to optimize our manpower including how we organize, train and equip with our Guard and Reserve components. We have been very fortunate to see volunteerism stay at the rate it has been. So this support of the total force partners has helped alleviate some of the strain upon our active duty.

There's also great work being done in training partnerships with our Airmen. I would like to highlight the Airmen at Meridian, for example.

The Mississippi Guard has done outstanding work in delivering combat ready Airmen for our MC-12 fleet. From accepting their first class in March, their first aircraft in April, and then delivering combat ready Airmen in May, this total team has made great strides in record time and has directly contributed to today's fight. The impact that capability is having on today's fight is remarkable.

In fact I was at Meridian last week and had the opportunity to talk to a number of men and women that are in training there, and talk to the crew that then headed out on Saturday to deliver another aircraft to the theater as they headed out for a 30 hour mission, including about nine hops to get there. After about 24 hours on the ground, they were then tasked in the fight.

So as our OpsTempo remains high and our force structure changes, it requires the entire force to adapt to accomplish our mission. We must continue to build upon the successes of the total force and continue to overcome challenges to maintain our combat capability and mitigate the impacts on our people. After all, it's our people who are really our asymmetric advantage. As we take care of the mission we will continue to improve how we take care of them.

Next, ACC continues to be all in. We're all in today's fight and yes, we are focused on this fight of irregular warfare. Irregular warfare is not just a part of today's fight. I contend that it's going to be an enduring mission, and therefore it's an ACC priority.

So as an Air Force, the skills needed to operate effectively in this IW fight involves multiple capabilities, each of which must be cultivated and then maintained over time. We continue to build our pool of IW expertise through training and education. We've made great strides in adapting our training program to meet the demands of this mission. For instance, Green Flag is now focused solely on irregular warfare scenarios. This venue is providing realistic and valuable training for our air crews, our JTACS and our joint and coalition partners before they ever arrive in theater. In fact Green Flag is ongoing today and General Goldfein is down there participating and checking out that particular exercise.

We're also leveraging partnerships in our civilian communities as we learn to fight this irregular war. So our community partners have really stepped up and are allowing us to partner in ways that we've not been able to before.

We're also using the Civil Air Patrol more. And the reason I say we're using them more is because we have gone forward and used their aircraft as surrogates. Surrogate Predators. To simulate the RPA, full motion video, we have modified two Cessna 182s with a Predator sensor and we're providing high fidelity training without impacting the high

RPA demand which is down range as we continue to grow as fast as we can to 50 combat air patrols.

We're also increasing our ability to meet combatant commander requirements. Examples include the rapid fielding as I've mentioned already of the Mc-12. We're expanding the RPA CAPs as we go as fast as we can to 50 and then on beyond that to 65. The increased use of non-traditional ISR capability. We're bringing BACN on-line. We're also fielding the RQ-4 Block 20 as rapidly as we can.

As we continue to provide capabilities to prevail in today's fight, we cannot take our eye off the future and off the horizon. Our nation looks to our service to remain ready to fight should we be called upon on the high end.

In major combat operations we must be prepared. The myriad of potential conflicts we face demands that we develop new capabilities, but we continue to look for new ways to improve our current capabilities.

The A-10C is an example of this. We're continuing to upgrade our fleet with precision engagement by including the JDAM capability. Yet at the same time we're replacing the A-10 thin wings. This is an example of how we're dealing with increasing demands for combat capability for an aging inventory in a fiscally constrained environment. And you just heard a little while ago from General Klotz what we have planned for the bombers as they continue to be used in a way they had never been used before as we adapt for today's fight yet be prepared for what the future may hold with that long range strike capability.

Whether we're combating a counter-insurgency, fighting in major combat operations, of dealing with a combination of both, our training and readiness must be aligned to support the combatant commander and the CFAC expectations.

Another key ACC initiative is our end to end training review which we have recently begun. This is a significant effort to ensure ACC aligns CAF training priorities with CFAC expectations and what the war planning needs are. We are examining how we train and we report readiness to meet the demands of today's operation environment along with the current war plans. In this review we will assess which mission events require a higher degree of proficiency to ensure we have the right focus. We must take some things off the plate. We hear this constantly from our Airmen.

And in this area as we do the training review we will take measured risk to reduce secondary training demands based on the current IW fight and MCO taskings. CAF

exercises are also being right-sized but also being tailored to fall in line with CFAC priorities and the potential threat that we face.

Remaining ready to deliver capabilities across the range of military operations is a tall order, especially with a smaller force. This means we have to carefully balance how we train to meet the demands that are required of us. This overarching area remains a key objective for ACC and I content will do so for the next several years.

Finally, in a resource constrained environment we must ask ourselves some tough questions. How do we get the most capability while continuing to live within limited resources? This is the focus of our fourth priority. In addition to innovation and cross-domain integration, we need modernization efforts that keep our fleet viable and provide increased capability for tomorrow's fight. We were able to get a number of great ideas from our young Airmen at the recent WEBTAC that was held out at Nellie. Some in fact were resource neutral and will enable us to be prepared for tomorrow. The approach we must take to achieve this is to reduce the overall number of legacy aircraft, though. And we've got to reinvest those savings to keep the remaining fleet that we do have as capable, as modernized with as many upgrades as we can get.

This is in sharp contrast to the way the Air Force dealt with the fiscal constraints of the mid '70s that many of us here lived through. Following the Vietnam War we created a hollow force with a large but unsustainable inventory that could not deliver. Given the operations we face today, a large hollow force would undermine our nation's strategic goals and we cannot allow that to happen.

Therefore we must adjust to operating a smaller more capable fleet that is agile and poised to take on any challenge that we may see.

The centerpiece of our modernization effort is the F-35 program and you've heard about that. We've engaged with the Joint Program Office and are confident that the program will be back on track within the next year. If we experience further delays, though, we'll have a gap in our combat capability. In order to mitigate that gap as we modernize we will continue to maximize our capabilities with our legacy platforms and integrate them with our fifth generation aircraft.

So in conclusion, we have a challenging road ahead of us. It's going to require some additional tough choices,

even though you understand we've already made some tough choices. There are others to be made ahead of us.

So our strategy for the future must allow us to prevail across the wide range of military operations while remaining within budget limits. We cannot meet the challenges of today or tomorrow alone. It's incumbent upon all of us to continue to maximize the resources that we have and collectively adapt to win today's fight while preparing for tomorrow.

So thank you very much for your attendance here today, and it's not as bleak as it sounds. The reason it's not is because of the outstanding job that our Airmen continue to do on a day to day basis. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

[Applause].

Moderator: In true total force partnership, sir, you may not have been in the room earlier, this is the second stealth video we've had. The other one came from the Guard. Terrific.

The SecDef has talked about fielding a new bomber in the late 2020s. That means today's captains and majors will be responsible for bringing them to operational capability. Can we reasonably expect to maintain necessary mission capability until then? Please tell us what is meant also by what we heard, the portfolio approach.

General Fraser: Can we maintain? Yes, I think we can. In fact you heard Frank talk earlier about what we're doing our legacy bombers and some of the plans that are actually funded, they're in the POM, they're on the books, and some of them are already continuing to deliver. So it's going to make the bomber fleet a viable fleet for the foreseeable future.

We need to keep those programs on track, most certainly, and ensure that we get everything done that we have planned.

As far as a look to the future for long range strike, we know the tasks that we've been given. We in Air Combat Command as well as others will participate in that study and help determine what that way forward is.

But it's like the cross domain that I mentioned in my remarks. There are ways that we can do our job that are different than the way we've done it in the past. So that's what we're going to take into account as we look

forward to the future of long range strike and what will that mean as far as capabilities? Is it penetrating? Is it standoff? Is it going to be Prompt Global Strike mixed with manned, unmanned? So we've got to take a look at that and determine what that's going to be and that's what that study's going to help us do.

One, it's viable. And yes, we're going to participate in it, and we do have a way forward and we have some resources laid in to do that.

Moderator: Sir, have the RPV losses been greater or less than we've anticipated? And if greater, what are we doing to mitigate that?

General Fraser: I'll be honest, I don't know what the expected loss rate was, but every single loss of an RPA that we have had we do a full-up investigation. We've learned from those investigations on why and what the core reason was that resulted in the loss of that particular vehicle. Then we've managed to get that back in the system to ensure that the same thing is not repeated, whether it's a software, whether it's hardware, whether it's links, whatever it may be. So we have learned from every loss that we have had to be able to go back into the system, just like we do with other platforms to fix that. So we are on the right path. In fact the rates continue to come down.

Moderator: And as you've indicated in terms of the F-15, F-16 fleet, as we bring the fleet down we ought to be able to use some of those dollars to maintain greater capability and we wait for the F-35 to come on-line. Should the F-35 really slip, are there funds available then to do what we need to do to maintain that capability in the other platforms?

General Fraser: I'm confident in the restructure that we've recently gone through. I've had the opportunity to visit Fort Worth to meet with our industry partners there. Also in working with the JPO office. So for me to predict the future and what's going to happen, I'm confident in the changes that have been made and with the program that is laid in right now. Now it needs to produce. Then if we have other problems, then I'm sure we'll address them as we learn about it. But right now, I'm confident on the path that we're on.

Moderator: The Chief has mentioned on several occasions that the Air Force needs to increase capability but decrease vulnerability. How would that apply to Air

Combat Command, and what will we do with an Air Combat Command to support that?

General Fraser: Increase our capability?

Moderator: Increased capability and decreased vulnerability.

General Fraser: In our training program, for instance, increasing our capability is something that we're doing with respect, as I mentioned, to our exercise program. AS we continue to tailor and adapt the exercise program, that's going to help us decrease those vulnerabilities. We need to make sure that we are staying up on the exercises that we have laid in, not only the Red Flags, Green Flags, but even the local exercises. There's a lot of partnering that's actually going on out there and I think that helps decrease the vulnerabilities.

We're also utilizing our platforms in a different manner which decreases vulnerabilities. As the smart young folks who were out there at WEBTAC recently, and the things they came in and the other capabilities that are available from other domains to bring that in to increase their ability to get the job done, decreases vulnerability but increase capability, and it's that cross-domain integration that's actually having a huge impact on us.

Moderator: Sir, you had mentioned, we had some discussions earlier about the next generation bomber, and there's of course talk as you indicated about strategic attack, conventional war, close air support, differing missions for that particular platform. There is a discussion of family of systems. A lot of speakers talked about that today. So what do you see sir, personally, as the family of systems? And is that family applied to a capability outside of Air Combat Command? And if so, who will be the leader?

General Fraser: There's a myriad of capabilities out there. The family of systems is not just maybe all of our platforms as we think of our platforms. It could be kinetic, it could be non-kinetic. It could be in other areas. It could be with partners that we wind up partnering with because of capabilities they have and therefore increases our ability and our capabilities to make us even stronger as we partner with others.

It may be in another service that has capabilities because we can't have duplicative capabilities. Therefore partnering together will enhance us all and make us stronger.

There are a lot of ways both from a kinetic and a non-kinetic perspective as I think about a system of systems, and which will increase our combat capability.

Moderator: Would ACC be the leader of the family of systems?

General Fraser: We are leading that effort right now as we look forward, and doing a lot of analysis of various alternatives. So we're moving out. But it's not just us ourselves. It's with the rest of the CAF that we are actually working together. In fact we've got a CAF conference coming up later this year where we'll be talking about a large number of these things.

Moderator: The Secretary alluded yesterday to the new Russian fighter, did not see it as a threat necessarily for the way we've been moving forward in our high/low, F-35/F-22 kind of mix. What is your opinion about that? And the Chinese as well.

General Fraser: I have all the confidence in our United States Air Force and in really our Airmen. Our Airmen are the ones, as I said earlier, that really make the mission happen. And it is with the capabilities that we give them that give me confidence that we'll be able to succeed.

Moderator: So people. People as you'd indicated.

General Fraser: Yes. That's our asymmetric advantage.

Moderator: Looking ahead at the environment, sir, around the world perhaps in 2010, 2020, we've been expecting deployments of far better foreign fighters and air defense systems. Do you think that will happen? If so, can we realistically reduce our force structure in that same time period while preserving our strategic options? How long, for instance, do you see the 15 and the 16 with us?

General Fraser: We're going through some structural tests right now on the 16 to look and see if there isn't a possibility of extending the hours on that aircraft. We're also doing other things with the other platforms to understand where they are. We're taking a look at what else can, and this is going to be a part of this end-to-end review as far training goes. Are there other ways in which we can train? And where I'm coming from there is with respect to our simulators. We have already started moving

a number of things into simulation, modeling and simulation. So that's decreasing the strain on our aircraft. We're also doing things with some of our fleets. I'll talk about just briefly with respect to is there a better way to integrate and use others out there to get realistic training done? What I'm talking about there is for instance when we're putting up let's say F-22s, we send one up to be Red Air and we send another one to be Blue Air. We're not getting the right beans out of that. So is there another way that we can get better capability training so that every sortie's a real Blue sortie. We're getting a lot of things out of that as opposed to just being Red Air. So we're looking at some alternatives there. But this end to end training review is going to be the key as to what is really required, what can be moved from a required category down to a familiarization and then allow us to do that.

What can then further be moved even into live virtual constructive, for instance. So there are lots of ways to look at this. We'll do that and we're going to aggressively tackle this over this next year.

Moderator: Thank you, General Fraser, for anchoring the symposium, and thanks for coming.

General Fraser: Thanks, I appreciate it.

#