

## **Building High-End Readiness: Deploying Under the Air Force Generation Model"**

Voiceover:

Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Our next panel is about to begin. Please welcome our moderator, the Deputy Commander of Air Force's Central Command, Major General Clark J. Quinn.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

All right, good morning. Thank you. And on behalf of General Grynkewich, the ninth Air Force commander, very happy to be here today moderating this panel. As most are aware, AFCENT, over the last 30 years, has been the primary recipient of deployed forces. And in the foreseeable future, we will probably be the first recipient of some of the AFFORGEN forces, as they reach IOC.

Today, just like we have been for decades, we're executing 24/7 combat ops in support of Operation Inherent Resolve over both Iraq and Syria. And if it's been a few years since you've been to the AFCENT and CENTCOM AOR, and if you heard General Grynkewich talk yesterday, it's a little different. Russian flankers, Fullbacks, Fulcrums, are flying in and around our airspace. There's a dense, integrated air defense system that we are operating in and near. And it really goes back to what our national defense strategy says. We have to be ready for the high end fight. And that high end fight could be anywhere. It could be in the UCOM AOR, the INDOPACOM AOR. And even if you're coming to the CENTCOM AOR, you need to be ready for it.

We heard both Secretary Kendall and General Brown talk yesterday. Operational imperatives, the future operating concept. One of the most observable changes that's going to happen is the AFFORGEN, because it's going to apply to each and every airman that's deploying into our AOR. So we're happy to be here today to talk about that. The AFFORGEN model is going to move away from the decades-long crowdsourcing, asking hundreds of Airmen to come from dozens of locations to arrive at an air expeditionary wing. And then execute ops, immediately, as a high performing team. It will allow the Air Force to clearly articulate our finite capacity. And will focus on a capabilities-based force offering. So our service can better manage the balance between generating those forces, and then consuming them in support of global operations.

I think many of us inherently understand how this applies to a mission generation element. In other words, a flying squadron that's going down range. But it's also going to greatly affect the base operating support functions. What we refer to now as Air Expeditionary Wings, and what will soon be called XABs. One item that will remain constant, is it's a total force endeavor. If you go into our AOR right now... I checked last week, it was 24 and a half percent were Guard and Reserve. But that really depends on whether we have guard reserve flying units around. Or if it's just the base operating support... So it'll go anywhere from 25% up to about 35% of the Airmen in CENTCOM AOR are the Guard and Reserve members. And with that we have a very total force panel with us today. I'll briefly introduce each and then we'll go down the line with some opening comments.

So, General Loh, the director of Air National Guard. Responsible for developing and coordinating policies, plans, and programs for our 108,000 Guard Airmen and civilians. 90 Wings, 180 installations.

Lieutenant General John Healy is the Chief of the Air Force Reserve, and Commander of the Air Force Reserve Command. As the Chief of the Reserves, he's the principal advisor on all reserve matters to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff. And as the commander of the Reserve command, he has full responsibility for the supervision of all Air Force Reserve units around the world.

And then, General Neil Richardson, the deputy Director of Operations, Strategic Deterrents, and Nuclear Integrations, at Headquarters Air Mobility Command. Responsible for the policy and procedures for the worldwide air operations and transportation functions assigned to Air Mobility Command.

So with that... I'm not going to start with questions, because we have such a unique panel of the total force. I'm going to ask for opening comments from each... And then we'll begin the questions. So General Loh, over to you.

Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh:

Ah, good morning. Good morning, everyone. Hey, this is an exciting period in our United States Air Force, as we look at the innovations going on. And one of those is AFFORGEN. For the Air National Guard, it's AFFORGEN, it's the A-staff construct at home station, and of course deployed. And then multi-capable Airmen and agile combat employment. You've heard us talk about how we're going to source teams in the future, in order to get after delivering air power anytime, anywhere. For the Air National Guard, we took a hard look at how we would source an XAB, starting 1 October. We are just a little over six months from doing that. And in doing that, across the headquarters Air Force staff and out to the 90 wings, we said, "The best thing we can do is we can pair two of our wings together." And so for the first one, it's going to be the 169th out of South Carolina, and the 151st out of Utah. A CAF and MAF partnership.

And now over the next six months, train up that high performing team, and deliver that XAB to AFCENT. And as we look at all of this rotation in the AFFORGEN model, it really places the active component in a one to three for sourcing, and the Guard and Reserve in about a one to seven. So, as we pair these two together, you have to remember that, in the Guard, we still have home station missions that are going to continue. So, sourcing things for TRANSCOM, NORTHCOM, CYBERCOM, the employee and place missions don't stop. So Utah has to do employee and place missions, as does South Carolina, with the 169th. So it was easy for us to pair two units together to get after the XAB and go deliver that.

In this next six months period, we'll train them up as that high performing team. Across an air staff, something that we haven't done in the past. And then deploy them down range for the first 24:1 in one of the locations in CENTCOM. That's the overall game plan going in. As we did the rest of the analysis, it looks like we can source about five of these XABs throughout the period... Not ever breaking that one to seven... And getting within what I would call a sustainable force presentation model for our United States Air Force. So that's where the Guard's going on this. Thanks.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Excellent sir, thank you very much. General Healy?

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy:

Yeah, thanks for the opportunity this morning. Thanks to the AFA, I was given the opportunity to get a total force spin on what the subject du jour is. So I appreciate that. Worth noting, a lot of milestones discussed yesterday. But one worth noting on my behalf is April 14th next month. 75th the anniversary of the Air Force Reserve Command. So what that means to me, essentially, is less than a year after the Air Force split off from the Army Air Corps, they realized immediately they couldn't do it without the Air Force Reserve Command. So we've been providing shoulder to shoulder support, search capability and capacity since then. And when we look towards how we're going to transform into this new AFFORGEN model, I think we fall right in line with that, as always. What AFFORGEN provides us is not too different from what we've done for recent memory with regard to Reserve component periods.

We've essentially tried to stabilize our force, and provide them a degree of predictability. So that they're not only providing that stability predictability to their family, but to their civilian employers as well. And I think that's critical. We know when we're about to go out the door, we know when it's going to complete, we're able to ensure that our civilian employers are on board with that. And then we're able to give them a good amount of time because of the embedded dwells, before we have to do it again. I think what we're seeing right now with the AFFORGEN, is trying to instill that same discipline, enterprise-wide. Try to instill that same predictability and stability, enterprise-wide. So I think from our perspective going in, it looks as if from an XAB perspective, we're really going to be getting after, looking at 25:2 to 26:1, is being able to provide from then forward a continuous line of XAB that the Reserve Command could support.

In the meantime, what we're going to be able to do is try to re sync some of our wings to better meet that XAB requirement. With 24:1, and how we're going to roll out with that, essentially what we're going to do is, we are plugging holes. And when we talk about crowdsourcing, I think that's a fantastic term. Even though we have a very fairly stable and predictable RCP construct, when we move towards this AFFORGEN, we need to be able to predict when we're going to plug holes. We are disparate, all over the country, to fill one AF deployment right now. From a two person UTC to a 20 person UTC. What we're going to be able to do by moving forward, first by plugging holes in the 24:1, 24:2? We're also going to be able to work with an A-staff, and provide backfill for in-garrison support.

And I think that's one of the most significant impacts that the Reserve are going to be have going forward. As I mentioned, we've been total force for 75 years. And this is going to take a total force effort, as well, to get through the next part. And we're all in on this.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Excellent sir. Thank you. And from a mobility perspective, General Richardson.

Brig. Gen. Neil Richardson:

Okay. Good morning, AFA. It really is a pleasure to be here. Especially with two of the great math partners that we've got here in the Guard and the Reserve. And so I appreciate all that you do to enable what we do in AMC.

So I'll just jump right into a piece here. But over the last two years, AMC has been really focused on the fourth generation piece of the AFFORGEN. As you're probably aware, AMC answers to a specific combatant commander on a daily basis. And that's US TRANSCOM. But much like everybody else, we also work through the GFM process to service all the other combatant commanders with ready forces. AFFORGEN, over the last six months as we have entered IOC, has given us the opportunity to address how we present those forces to TRANSCOM on a daily basis. Through a process called the readiness driven allocation process.

And so that's a day-to-day conversation to make sure that we give them what they need. But we also require them then to prioritize, and to validate the right requirements for us. All of that to say, that gives us the opportunity to start to get after that high-end training that the Chief has asked us to get after. And that General Minihan has been working on as well. So shameless plugin here as well: part of that high-end training is Mobility Guardian that's coming up in July of this year. So, I look forward to that as well. But again, it's about presenting the right forces to the combatant commanders, both ready and willing. And we're doing that all in the midst of a very high ops tempo from the day-to-day piece from TRANSCOM. So, sir, I'm looking forward to the conversation today. And thank you for having me on this panel.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

All right, excellent. Thank you. So flexibility is a key to the air power, and that is something that has not changed over my 30-plus years in the service. So we're going to go a little bit non-standard. I'm going to make room in this chair right now. And there is one gentleman in the audience that I mentioned... AFCENT is going to be one of the primary, and the first recipients, of the AFFORGEN forces and the XABs. So we have a vested interest in making sure that they are successful, and work correctly on day one.

And we are only one combatant command that they could, and will be, offered to. But there is one person in the audience that has vested interest in making sure they are correct as well. And if I ask them how many days until day one of AFFORGEN, he will know it to the exact day. Perhaps even the hour. And he and his team have been a tremendous teammate with AFCENT. Lots and lots of VTCs. Every OPT that the air staff is running, we've been a part of. Not because we're contributing to AFFORGEN, but because we will be the recipient of it. So with that, I would like to ask Lieutenant General Slife, our Air Force A3, to come up and make a few comments. He did know that I was going to do this, by the way.

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

Yeah. Thank you. Thanks. Hey. Nothing like being a no-notice panelist without preparation, on a stage full of a thousand Airmen. So that's fantastic. Thanks, Clark.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Yes, sir.

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

What question can I answer for you?

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Sir, let me ask this. So, if I was an airman, and I'm thinking we're going to deploy a whole bunch of Airmen from one base. How is that base that we're deploying all those Airmen from going to keep running?

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

So the one of our challenges as an Air force is, for reasons that made perfect sense in the context of the time over the last 30 years, we have in many ways, particularly for our agile combat support career fields, we have optimized for garrison efficiency. And not necessarily for war fighting effectiveness. And we've been able to get away with that in an operating environment where, frankly, we have not been heavily pressured by our adversaries. Our main operating bases throughout the CENTCOM AOR, throughout AFRICOM, have been relatively secure. And so we have been able to get away with taking three Airmen from this base, and five Airmen from this base, and two Airmen from that base, deploying them, and expecting them to come together on day one and be a team. But we don't actually think that that's the way the future operating environment is going to permit us to operate.

We're going to have to build, and generate, teams of Airmen at home station that train together, deploy together, and then come home and reset together. And go through that cycle. And so, to do that, it's going to put pressure on base operating support across our garrison installations. Across the Air Force. Because it's going to be hard to pull a team of Airmen out of any squadron, at any base, and expect that base to continue to operate without any interruption to services. Because, for all of the people on the stage that wear a flight suit, and grew up flying airplanes, or being in the operations career fields, when

we weren't deployed, we were training. We were at home training, right? When the defender, in the audience, is not deployed, they are generally doing garrison function. They're not training for their deployed mission. They're doing some garrison function, required to keep whatever Air Force base safe and secure on a day-to-day basis.

And so how do you pull that manpower out of squadrons, to build teams that can train together and deploy together as teams, without an excessive impact to the installation? Frankly, that is the central question of how we'd build force generation teams going forward.

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy:

And if I can add, I think this is a real opportunity. For instance, when you started giving the countdown to some of the MAJCOM commanders...

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

207 days.

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy:

So there was a, "What?" response. So, the harsh reality of we've got responsibilities. I received calls from more than one MAJCOM commander saying, "Hey, can you help a brother out?" And, absolutely we can. I think this is a great opportunity for some of our wings out there, where we're classic associates... And this is a hard part to codify within AFFORGEN as well... But how we can provide that backfill to maintain that daily operations, at those units where we have classic associates. I think we're perfectly poised to do that.

We're going through the struggles and iterations just like anybody else is, in terms of transferring to that A-staff construct. But I think it'll be clunky going out of the box. But I think we'll be able to get something aligned in A-plans, with our classic associate units, that allow us to get after not only plug and play into XABs, and actually go out the door. But that home station backfill of that active component. Or likewise, when we start pulling XABs, can we get an active duty backfill in terms of maintaining the day-to-day operations of a reserve unit? Well, I see a lot of opportunity there.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Thank you, gentlemen. Although it is not part of ninth Air Force AFCENT, at Shaw Air Force Base there's an attack group. Flies MQ9s, and was over there a couple of weeks ago. And because of the unique nature of the MQ1, MQ9 mission, they've essentially been in combat ops since the day they were first conceived. It's just been nonstop combat operations. The group commander over there mentioned that just a few weeks ago, one of his squadrons for the first time ever, was not flying a combat line. They had actually gone into the reset phase. So of the four phases in the AFFORGEN, we have reset, prepare, ready, and then available to commit. It's not going to quite work out into six month bins for that MQ9 community just yet. But nevertheless, he has one squadron that is actually in that reset phase, for the first time ever, for both the Guard and the Reserve. Can you run through a little bit of what those four different phases, if I'm an airman... I'm a National Guardsman, I could be part-time... How will those bins look different for me?

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy:

I think, yeah. This is one of the things where I'm really excited about AFFORGEN. As I said before, we've been crowdsourced on steroids. We've been filling UTCs all over the deployment cycles, for years now.

And what this is going to give us the opportunity to do... Essentially we've got a unit out there, and pick any unit equipped wing, or a classic associate... And at no time are they ever synchronized, right now, in terms of a reset or prepare. And what it provides is a constant state of training and readiness requirements. Which is a burden, sometimes, on the unit. Makes it much more challenging.

What this'll change for us? In the next two years as we prep for instance, is... And to go out the door with an XAB line... What this allows us to do is get that reset period. Where we're trying to synchronize, within each one of the wings. So that when we start really getting into this, and we finish that sink period, we can look at a unit-equipped wing. I keep using Pittsburgh... And if you're to the 911th, I don't have anything planned for you... But it gives them the opportunity where they can go out and deploy as multiple units from one wing, get back, reset together, work on their internals, work on their PCSs, work on their PME. Train together, just as the model shows. It allows us a great opportunity, I think, to reduce the overall requirements, so to speak, on the wing, by providing that synchronization.

Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh:

Yep. I think same thing, you have two pieces of that. You have the force element piece and the XAB piece. So on the force element piece we're going to come back. And those force elements may or may not be able to reset. Just to the nature of the 24/7 365 mission, that we're doing for Homeland Defense, that we're doing for TRANSCOM, that we're doing for CYBERCOM, and others. So, that base will not necessarily go into reset. That's why we're pairing two together. And that organized training piece will continue to function.

For the actual XAB, however, it will allow us to get that into a predictable model. Predictable model with employers, predictable model with families. And that actually helps. So you know exactly where you are, what I'll call on the patch chart. You know which wing is going to be sourced, at this time, in this XAB. And then that wing commander can set a training program and a training period up, so that as they go through this cycle, we fulfill those training requirements. So that they're ready to go out the door at that XAB period. And whether we source or not, to the joint force or backfill, they know which what they're supposed to do, how they're supposed to be trained, and then they're ready to go.

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

General Quinn, can I go off script here for just a minute?

Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh:

Yes sir.

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

We're up here having a conversation about XABs, as if everybody in the audience says a clue what we're talking about. And I think it might be worthwhile to actually back up a step and let everybody know what it is. What an XAB is, what we're talking about. And so forth. And so, for those that might not have been immersed in this, as we talk about AFFORGEN, the idea is that the whole Air Force is turning on a four phase cycle. Roughly six months per phase, to go through a preparation phase, all the way to a deployment phase. And then reset, and go through the cycle again.

The XAB itself, if you think of an air expeditionary wing, one way that you might think of an air expeditionary wing is in three horizontal slices. At the top of this thing is what you might call the command and control slice. This is a wing commander, a command chief, a wing A-staff. This is the slice of the AEW that provides the purpose and direction to everything that AEW is doing.



Underneath that C2 slice, there are a number of, what we talk about is mission generation force elements. And so it might be a C130 Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. Or an F22 Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. These are mission generation force elements. It consists of aviators, aircraft maintainers, all the career fields that go to actually generate air power on a day-to-day basis.

And then the third slice underneath all of it, underpinning all of it, is a series of packages of Airmen that really do the things that we have historically called base operating support. Or agile combat support. But really I think it's more than that. But those are the terms that we have today. And in that slice, there are things that we call an establish the airbase force element, an operate the airbase force element. There are a number of these. And those three slices are what makes up the AEW.

When we talk about an XAB, the expeditionary airbase, it is the top and bottom slices. And the big idea is that those will generally come from a location. And not be crowdsourced. So the mission generation pieces might come from wherever they need to come to for the mission. But those top and bottom slices will generally come from the same base, to the extent we can. And so for example, the 4th fighter wing at Seymour Johnson. If the 4th fighter wing was the lead wing for an XAB, that would mean that they would provide the C2 and wing A-staff C2 functions. And they would provide the bulk of those agile combat support functions, that are really the basis upon which this whole thing resides.

So we're mixing some terms together here. But the big thing to think about is that when you hear the term "XAB," you ought to be thinking, "That's a team largely generated from a base, that trains together and deploys together for a six month rotation."

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Excellent, sir. Thank you. That's why I went off-script in bringing you up here. So that you could keep us all baselined in what we are actually talking about. And, sir, I know I've heard you speak a couple of times about this. Once the AFFORGEN and the XAB process gets rolling, it will be, I believe, a fairly smooth turnover every six months. But the initial transition from Air Expeditionary Wings to XABs... To quote you sir, is "The phone books don't match." We've got 700 or a thousand Airmen out at Al Udeid, or Al Dhafra that are doing a job. And they're going to hand it over to, not their one for one replacement. But to an inbound XAB. And that's something that General Slife's team has been working on, that initial transition, quite a bit to make it go seamless. Because if you think about stateside wings... I'll use an example of asset management... There's probably a GS12 or a GS14 that's been doing it at fill-in-the-blank Air Force base for five or 10 years. It's just seamless. They do it every day.

Every six months, we're handing that to either a new lieutenant or a new NCO that's deploying down range. And they are not necessarily organized, trained, and equipped to do that function. But we're going to ask them to do it. As we certify the XABs, before they're going down range, we are identifying all those functions that they'll have to do. So that we can hand that phone book to the correct person, of, "Here's your new job." And then once it is established, it'll become somewhat more seamless.

I'd like to go back down to General Richardson just for a second. You alluded to it in your opening comments. But while you are part of the AFFORGEN, you're going to have both force elements, you're going to have XAB contributions... Air Mobility Command is also executing a worldwide global 24/7 mission with a lot of your assets. How do those fit together?

Brig. Gen. Neil Richardson:

So for the XAB piece, I'll just address that pretty quickly. Those skill sets are one squadron deep across the Air Force, as well. So, from the AMC perspective, I think we're going to look a lot like the Guard and the Reserve does. As far as, we're going to put the team together, they'll deploy together, they'll come back, they'll reset together. And go through the four bins together.

When it comes to the force generation to include our CR forces, it's a little bit different. We are bifurcated between the GFM process, and the process of hoarding US TRANSCOM's global demand on a daily basis. I alluded to it a little bit earlier, but the readiness-driven allocation process goes back to what General Lowe mentioned. And that's that risk-to-force, that deploy-to-dwell, or tasked-to-dwell, as we call it in AMC. We are looking for somewhere in that one to three deployed-to-dwell, task-to-dwell range.

Everything that TRANSCOM does, is on a daily basis. So that drives the conversation between the A3 and AMC. And the gawk at TRANSCOM. To be able to figure out what the right answer is, based on the priorities, and the validated requirements they have out there. When we exceed what we've given to them... And we do bend that by a risk-to-force model. Typically we try to stay in the moderate risk-to-force for our forces across the board... When we exceed that, it's based on surge capacity, surge requirements. And then at that point, we do it for as long as we can before we start to hurt. Then the readiness model that goes forward into the future. So think of that two years into the future.

A great example was the Afghanistan evacuation. 17 days of just really intense execution. When we looked at it, the planes were hurting. The people were hurting. But overall they were still able to meet their commitments into the future. So we've got to make that balance between what is right for right now, and what is right for the future for deployments.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

All right, excellent. So that was a TRANSCOM perspective. General Loh, you mentioned it a little bit as well there. There's still requirements. There's going to be presidential support, there's going to be Homeland Defense Alert missions. How will the wings that you are looking to task, to either be XABs... The mission generation elements are largely already accounted for in our rotational posture... But those XABs, and the wings that you're going to send out there, how will those be matched with who has an alert mission, or a presidential support?

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

Sure. So it's a little bit of expectation management across the force right now. And I've been very open and transparent. I go, "Okay. 24:1, 207 days from now, we know things aren't going to be perfect." I mean, this is getting into a new force generation model for our United States Air Force. So, what I need is that communication back and forth to say, "What do you see as the gaps, as you go through this analysis, the six months of preparation order, make this happen? And then where can we help you, both initially on the front end? And figure out how to do it on the back end so it's long term sustainable? Okay.

Because you're right, we're not ever going to do, like Neil said, give up that 24/7 mission. Those mission elements that are required. And now we have a GFM on top of that, in order to make this happen. So we're just going to balance the two. And right now it's just expectation management. And we'll buy down as much risk as we can, so that we can get into a sustainable period. And then that'll drive some organizational change within our United States Air Force, for long-term sustain.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Thank you, sir.

General Healy, one of the things that I've noticed over my past 18 or 20 months in AFCENT, is very often if the active duty has a difficult time filling a very specific position, we don't have the right skill level, the airman's back to back deployed, we just don't have the right fill... When we reach out to the ARC, the Reserve world, or Guards, we very often find a volunteer to fill those requirements. As we move into the



AFFORGEN, and we're actually going to start bending out in '25 and '26. Will reserve Airmen still have the opportunity to deploy additionally, if they want to?

Lt. Gen. John P. Healy:

The short answer is absolutely. We've been a volunteer force, and we're going to continue to be a volunteer force. I think that's one of the things that makes us as strong as we are. Is the ability for our Airmen to step up... And use 12 301 Delta, for instance... To ensure that they're meeting the requirements. There comes challenges with that too, though. As we've mentioned for the last 30 years, we've been working as a volunteer force to meet some of these requirements. With predictability and stability in mind. Sometimes that volunteerism, while the member wants to be there, and wants to do it? The volunteer doesn't necessarily provide that stability, predictability, to the employer as well. In which case we use the term "Voluntold." It's sometimes a little bit easier now, as civilian employers get this mobilization fatigue. If we are able to use, for instance 12 tier port bravo, for everything from exercises to unnamed organizations, it provides us the ability where that member wants to volunteer, but has maybe some issues with their civilian employer where they're like, "Hey, I'm being voluntold to go do these things."

So that's just on a day-to-day non-AFFORGEN type cycle. The allowance to be more accessible, I think, predictable, from both MAJCOM, combat and command requirements. But I think also, when we start plugging into that 25:2, 26:1, and we are carrying out one of those XAB lines, ideally we're going to be utilized... As General Slife said... As a unit going out the door. But we are still going to be available to fit those parent tailored portions of other XABs. As I mentioned, there's always capability that resides within every one of our units, that is specifically tailored to that unit too... I mean, keep in mind we're a MAJCOM that supports and provides forces to every other MAJCOM as well. So we have a niche. We have roles in there that we can certainly take advantage of and offer volunteerism. In and above XABs, and our fourth generations, as well.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

Excellent. Thank you, sir. I will say that predictability was a term you used a couple of times in there. And that's true for whether it's a ARC component or active duty. When I go down range, if I'm in a room with more than about 20 Airmen, one of the questions I typically will ask is, "How much advanced notice did you have at this deployment?" The Guard and Reserve will typically be a year-ish when raising their hands. And if it's 20 people, I will eventually get to the point where there's two or three people that had 30 days or less notice. And those are almost always active duty. So going into the predictability, knowing well in advance, when you PCS into a new wing, what bin you're in, what phase you're in and when you can expect to deploy will be very helpful.

I think for any airman that has deployed, you've probably been, at different times, either gone as a unit. Or perhaps gone as either a very small element. Or as an individual. Getting on an airplane, getting on a rotator all by yourself, and meeting a new crew when you get to your location to work. I will say that I have heard many times, "We need to change the way we deploy. We need to change the way we deploy." And we're doing it now.

So, General Slife. You led a VTC with literally almost a thousand teams out stations dialed in, just a couple of weeks ago. And you very clearly laid out why now is the time that we are making this change. Can I ask you to share that with the crowd here? Why are we doing this now?

Lt. Gen. James C. Slife:

Well... Not to pander to the audience in the front row... But General Brown has told us that if we're not uncomfortable, we're not changing fast enough. And so, good news, Chief, we're changing fast enough now. Because I'm extraordinarily uncomfortable about this. And the reason we're changing our force generation and force presentation models in the Air Force, is because the strategic environment has changed. And I won't go through a long soliloquy on this. But really, in the last 50 years of our history as a United States Air Force, there have been four of these moments where the strategic environment has shifted. And when it did, we had to adapt to that to be ready to meet the challenges of the emerging environment.

The first one of those was in 1973 at the end of the Vietnam War. There were major changes across the whole military. But certainly for the Air Force in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. We recapitalized platforms. We made significant investments in realistic training. We invested in stealth and precision guided munitions. And we built the air force that we needed to adapt to that environment.

The second one of those strategic inflection points came at the end of the Cold War. And when the end of the Cold War happened, we moved into a different operating environment. And the operating environment of the 90s, air power became a tool of coercive diplomacy. And so we were sent abroad to enforce no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, to do operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. Procurement essentially stopped through the 90s, as we went into a procurement holiday in the aftermath of the Cold War. And our Air Force shrunk by half. And so, major changes after that strategic inflection point at the end of the Cold War.

The third one was 9/11. And in the aftermath of 9/11, we had to reshape the Air Force to account for long-term contingency operations in the Middle East, south Asia, north and east Africa. And that's the air force that we still have today. And so why did we get into crowdsourcing? We got into crowdsourcing because we had to. Because the environment demanded it of us. Why did we get heavily into RPAs? Because the strategic environment demanded it of us. And so, we adapt as an Air Force when the environment shifts.

And we are at a moment where the environment has shifted. Our adversaries are challenging us, in ways that we haven't been challenged in any of our careers. China is militarizing submerged sea features in the South China Sea. Russia has broken a nearly three-quarter of a century peace in Europe with their territorial ambitions. We have proxy actors, non-state actors that continue to challenge us. This is a different strategic environment that we've been in. And so we have to get ourselves, as an air force, up on the balls of our feet to meet that strategic environment.

And so, that's the why behind it. At the end of the day, as the last panelists talked to us about, the airman is our competitive advantage. And we will adapt to what this new environment needs. It's just going to be a little turbulent getting from here to there.

Maj. Gen. Clark J. Quinn:

All right. Sorry. Thank you. I think we're approaching the end of our time, and I wasn't sure if I wanted to start with that or end with it. But I think that the "why" is a good way to end this discussion. Because there is a strategic imperative to it. Although I am not in a joint billet right now, I work for the United States Air Force. I am a component of CENTCOM. And on any given day, somewhere between 70 or 80 percent of my efforts are joint in nature. And not really Air Force in nature. And I will tell you, it is sometimes difficult to convey a finite capacity. Especially within base operating support. It's very easy to go, "We have this many fighter squadrons. This many are deployed already. This is how many we need in a reset phase." That is easy to explain to a joint air staff.

But when it gets to individual Airmen... When we're fighting for un-air men to be deployed to do civil engineering, or HVAC maintenance... And the joint staff goes, comes back and says, "Explain how this is

high risk, if we don't send you this one airman," it becomes an almost unwinnable argument. But when we can bend things into an AFFORGEN, an XAB... "The Air Force has this many of them that we can deploy. And they're in these different phases." It'll become much easier to explain to the joint staff. And to other combatant commanders that are the ultimate consumers of it. So, General Slife, thank you for allowing me to... I won't say no notice... But very short notice... Ask you to come up on the stage. I think because your team is really leading this, it was key to have you up here. And then for the rest of our Total Force panel. Thank you very much for your time today. I appreciate it. Thanks.

Voiceover:

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we invite you into the exhibit hall for our short coffee break. While in the exhibit hall, please take the opportunity to visit with over 100 of our industry partners. They're looking forward to your visit, and are most interested in what you have to say. Please be back here in your seats at 09:40 for the morning's last panel, before the Spark Tank competition.