

AIR, SPACE, AND CYBERSPACE POWER IN THE 21ST CENTURY
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DAY ONE

DINNER AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Aligning the Air Force Vision with the Future Security Setting

7:15 - 9:00 P.M.

The Honorable Michael B. Donley

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: While you're having dessert, I would like to take maximum opportunity of our limited time this evening, and therefore I would like to introduce our dinner speaker at this time. It is with very great pleasure that I welcome Michael Donley, who is Secretary of the Air Force as our dinner speaker this evening.

Before taking his present position in the United States Air Force as Secretary of the Air Force, Mr. Donley served as the Director of Administration and Management in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. His previous government positions include a number of very important appointments. He was acting Secretary of the Air Force and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Controller, and Deputy Executive Secretary and Director of Defense Programs in the National Security Council.

He also comes to the present work that he's doing from the private sector some time ago. He was Senior Vice President at Hicks and Associates. He has also served as Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analyses and Senior Consultant in the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces.

I might also add that Secretary Donley earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Southern California. And mentioning this, I realized why he was quizzing me during dinner about some of the recent works in international relations and international security studies.

I might also mention that Mr. Donley also attended the Senior Executives in National Security Program at a neighboring university whose name I can't quite remember. It's in Cambridge, and it's around something called Harvard Square. So, I mention that as well.

The topic of the Secretary's presentation this evening is "Aligning the Air Force Vision with the Future Security Setting." So it is a great pleasure to have Secretary Donley with us this evening. [applause]

HONORABLE MICHAEL B. DONLEY: Well, thank you, Bob. And thank you to the Fletcher School and IFPA for organizing this conference. Thanks also to General Manner and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency who's been supporting this effort along the way, and many aspects of the Air Force staff that have supported this fine event.

I have to tell you, this has been a little bit the talk of the corridors today as I ran into several senior leaders, Ash Carter earlier today, the Deputy Secretary and others, sort of quizzing each other, "Are you on this air space and cyber conference?" And everybody said yes, everybody had signed up for this event and you have managed to pull together a very, very distinguished and experienced group of national security professionals. So, I must be in the wrong place. [laughter] There are way too many people who know too much about my background and know me too well for me to be up at the dais this evening. But it is in that regard, though, a special privilege and honor to be with so many good friends and so many respected professionals in this field.

You started the day with the chief laying out some important areas in which we're focusing our strategic planning efforts. His thoughts on joint initiatives, increased capabilities that the Air Force is striving for, reducing vulnerabilities, doing the kinds of things that will help prepare our nation and Air Force for the future security environment.

And as a complement to the chief's thoughts this evening, I'd like to share some ideas about how we'll align the Air Force vision with the future security environment. As I gave this some thought in preparation, I started to focus on not just the difficulty of doing that in this complex security environment, but the probability, the likelihood that we'll miss, we'll miss. But let me start from the beginning.

Our vision, of course, remains for the United States Air Force to be recognized as a trusted and reliable joint partner. Your Air Force looks to answer the nation's call with speed and range, flexibility. And although the nature of conflict continues to change in new dimensions, these enduring aspects of air power remain key to providing our combatant commanders and national leadership a wide array of strategic options.

Looking forward, it's certain that our national leadership will need an extensive set of tools. The complex and hybrid nature of future conflict will continue to challenge us and will demand coalition, whole of government and joint applications of power. National and international security will continue to be a team sport. And it will be key for teammates to understand their respective roles to plan and to work together to call on their strengths in support of national needs.

Perhaps the short answer to the question of how will we achieve alignment of our vision with the future security environment, is that the Air Force needs to remain vigilant in tying our work, of course, to the national security strategy, the QDR, and other authoritative guidance that sets the direction for the Department of Defense and the larger national security community. That's an easy answer.

In the future, however, we'll confront a wide range of strategic challenges such as global terror networks, nations determined to build long-range missiles and nuclear weapons, and others ready to sell the technology to do it. Rising economic and regional powers whose intentions may be unclear, the continuing problem of failed or failing states, new challenges in the space domain, a new war fighting domain called cyber, and others.

And as we confront these issues with limited resources, perhaps at a deeper level our challenge is really how to plan for uncertainty in this complex security environment. So tonight, I'd like to explore a handful of strategies aimed at how we plan for uncertainty and ambiguity in this complex environment. How we mitigate the possibility of surprise. How we can both shape and recover from what Secretary Gates often reminds us will likely be imperfect assessments about the future.

First is engagement. In this vein, I'm reminded of Woody Allen's admonition that 90 percent of life is just showing up. To be sure, we need to be present when and where change is occurring. To be present in regions of interest and building both partnerships and partner capacity along the way. Being engaged provides early warning, it helps us understand the direction and pace of change through the eyes of potential adversaries and partners in the region.

Continuous engagement provides a way of creating shared perspectives of the strategic environment, opportunities to shape that environment in ways favorable to the United States. And this applies at all levels, from combatant commander and other senior interactions, down to the C17 load master who, when the ramp goes down, is able to speak the language of his foreign partner on the ground.

Secretary Gates has noted that understanding the traditions, the motivations and languages of other parts of the world has not always been a strong suit for the United States. It was a problem during the Cold War, he noted, and remains a problem today. We've moved to remedy this shortfall with our Air Force, culture, region, and language flight plan. As one step of this plan to develop coalition-minded warriors, we now have

nearly 350 pol. mil. and regional affairs specialists in our Air Force, and another 228 in the pipeline this year. Additionally, we've made the career field attractive enough so that we now have eight high quality candidates applying for each available position. This and other similar initiatives posture us to better influence outcomes across the spectrum of conflict. But we have a long way to go.

Partners with a wide range of capabilities challenge us to broaden the scope and depth of our engagements. The Iraqi and Afghan air forces, for example, present fundamental challenges such as establishing safe flight operations, technical schools, logistics systems. And parenthetically, as we partner to help rebuild these air forces, they're conducting real world operations that do matter and we need to do this at an affordable level. And by the way, hurry up.

Well developed air forces, including several represented here this evening and in this conference, often seek partnership with us in the most advanced weapons systems like joint strike fighter, ISR and space based capabilities. The air forces of eastern Europe probably fall between these two extremes. But we recently recognized building partner capacity as a core function for our Air Force, for which our capabilities must be sufficiently robust and flexible to address a broad range of engagement needs.

Second, our engagement also supports access. As General Schwartz noted this morning, basing access is the lifeblood of a globally minded Air Force. A second approach to planning for uncertainty involves how we posture our forces abroad. Our task here is to find the right balance between the forward stationing of U.S. forces in key regions, which sends the appropriate message of long-term interest and commitment and periodic rotations and deployments which can deliver strategic messages while preserving greater flexibility in our global posture. But can also limit our opportunities for sustained partner engagement. And, of course, understanding the motivations and the sensitivities of our potential partners helps us find that right balance.

Identifying and exercising a full range of contingency basing opportunities abroad is important to all parts of our forces, such as mobility and tanker forces that facilitate joint movement and logistics. This is why we also sustain periodic deployments of long-range strike aircraft in the Pacific, and why as we eventually feel the joint strike fighter will consider the need for early bed downs outside the continental United States.

A third way to accommodate uncertainty in the international environment is to build a balanced force that in essence hedges our bets. We must build in the flexibility and versatility that enables our forces to operate effectively across the potential spectrum of conflict. This includes the enabling capabilities on which the entire Joint Force depends at any level of conflict; capabilities like C4, mobility and air refueling and ISR, just to name a few.

It also reflects the need for a broad range of capabilities. For example, while we're currently reinforcing our counterinsurgency capabilities, we're also building the joint strike fighter. While working on command and control for missile defense, we're building the light attack and armed reconnaissance and the light air support aircraft to help us more effectively train nascent air forces. While planning for the recapitalization of the tanker fleet, we're strengthening space situational awareness and cyber defense. While building up language and cultural competency, we continue research on directed energy weapons.

Of course, building a balanced force also has a temporal dimension. We have to balance our operational focus on today's fight, which we must win, with the necessary investment for tomorrow's fight and preserve the personnel training, research and acquisition and other institutional foundations upon which our Air Force capabilities are built.

In building the force, a balanced force for strategic flexibility and versatility, we should encourage operational concepts that will optimize its capabilities. A third way to deal with uncertainty is through operational innovation. As other speakers have noted today,

the history of air power is replete with examples of operational innovation, concepts and tactics developed and executed with largely existing technologies and developed rapidly enough to be tactically and strategically relevant.

Recent examples for us include weaponizing remotely piloted aircraft, using fighters and bombers with sniper pods for ISR support roles in Iraq and Afghanistan. The underlying principle is that we should fully understand and exploit the capabilities that we have in every dimension. This means connecting the dots across the air, space and cyber domains, recognizing interdependencies and both the weaknesses and opportunities. Innovation is a competency that we must continue to nurture as a potent mechanism against uncertainty, and it is part of our air minded American heritage to do so.

Finally, and perhaps the most important capability that we can foster, is the institutional capacity for change, and to strengthen our capacity for risk assessment. If strategy is about balancing ends, ways and means, there are several ways to fail at this work. One is attempting to predict a strategic environment for which we are planning too far in the future without due regard for the twists and turns of international politics between here and there.

Another is to lock in a single approach or a strategy for success which risks failure if the means for success, say resources or technological breakthrough, do not materialize. Yet another is to let administrative processes grow so cumbersome that we become incapable of making necessary changes in ways and means within a strategically meaningful time frame. The strategic environment can change and shift dramatically. In fact, more than once or twice across a 25 year acquisition cycle. So the Air Force must have the institutional competence for change to get inside this proverbial OODA loop which operates no less at the strategic level than it does the tactical level.

At the root of an institutional capacity for change is a dynamic approach to strategy making. The driving vision of a dynamic leader and insightful assessments of what the world will be like 10 or 20 years from now do have their place. But institutions like the

Q & A Session

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: Thank you very much, Secretary Donley. We understand that you will take a few questions from the group here. So, who would like to begin with a question for Secretary Donley? Are there any hands up out here? In that case, could you explain to us a bit more fully how the Air Force is building into its planning process the needs that you will see for change over the next several years? I think, for example, of President Eisenhower who said that “plans are useless, but planning is essential.” And I think that captures the essence of what you were saying a few moments ago. And if you would like to give us a further set of guidelines on what is being done, that would be very useful.

SECRETARY DONLEY: Well, as many of our uniformed audience knows already in the United States Air Force, we are working to focus our attention on the 12 core functions that the Air Force provides for the joint team, and we're working through deliberative processes as we prepare for the FY '12 program build to more carefully look at those 12 core functions to identify the priorities in those functions, the strategy behind how the Air Force will continue to develop its capabilities in each of those areas so we can get a sense for the priorities in each one and work combinations of capabilities across those functions. To test our assumptions as we go into the resource cycle, to test those assumptions against the QDR, against current operational experience, and to develop a very tight and crisp perspective of those things that we will declare, if you will, as our service priorities going forward.

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: We have time for another question or two if anyone would like to pose one? It's very difficult to see from up here, so please stand and ask your question. There's the microphone. Identify yourself?

AUDIENCE: Secretary Donley, Colin Clark, DoD Buzz. The F35, there's been a great deal of discussion about just how much trouble the program is in and whether it is in

trouble. Do you feel that the program as you are currently re-jiggering it, is going to be delivered on time to our allies and just how much trouble is it in?

SECRETARY DONLEY: Thank you, Colin, for that question. [laughter] Is Dave Van Buren here tonight?

AUDIENCE: Mr. Secretary, I hope you answer it the same way I ... (inaudible)-- [laughter]

SECRETARY DONLEY: Well look, the department went through a review process this fall based on a set of reviews that had been set in motion early in 2009, even some before then, to take an independent look at the status of the program, including cost estimates, manufacturing estimates and a very detailed, deep dive into the program. So at the end of the calendar year, we had a program office estimate and in concert with a contractor estimate of where the program stands. We had independent estimates, and we had to put those two together and rationalize them. So what you'll see coming out is the result of that work and a restructuring of the program. And that's about all I will say right now, except I'm very confident that you will see strong support for this program from the Secretary and the DOD leadership team. This is still the largest program in the Department of Defense. It is among the most important, not just because of its size but because of its importance to the United States Air Force, to the Navy, to the Marine Corps, and to about eight other air forces around the world. So we are committed to this program, and whatever adjustments, fluctuations, bumps in the road we face, we will get through them to make this a successful program. It is that important for the department and for the broader national security community and our international partners.

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: We have another question from right here.

AUDIENCE: Secretary Donley, as you visited down range, give us some of your impressions of our incredibly brave airmen and how they're doing?

SECRETARY DONLEY: Well, thank you, John. Well again, some of you have heard my five minute speech on that. I'll try to make it two minutes. The first thing that struck me, I think, very early on was the scope of the Air Force's involvement in supporting the current fight. We have a very, in relative terms, a smaller footprint in the theater, about 30,000 airmen at any given time. But there are thousands and thousands of airmen that stand behind all that work. And if you just think about the operations that we're engaged in, most of those forces get to the theater by air lift, and the air lift is supported by tankers. We're operating the ports with the Army and other members of the joint team. We have responsibility for large joint bases in the region. We provide the C4 and reach back to CONUS supports the command and control structure for the joint team. We do that with satellites, a couple of dozen satellites of various kinds, that provide that real time connectivity back to CONUS.

Yes, we do provide armed over watch that gives the soldiers and the marines on the ground almost instantaneous access to air support at any point or time in the theater. We're also providing the ISR support which the combatant commanders have become so dependent on which we rely for so many different joint functions. Looking for high value targets, looking for IEDs, establishing patterns of behavior, innumerable ISR related tasks. And we've been meeting those demands successively, and as we meet those demands, the goal posts move and we get tasked to provide even more of it. So, ISR has been a very big business.

And supporting that work is not just the remotely piloted aircraft, but thousands of airmen and the intelligence system, most of whom are not in the theater. And that reach back through satellite and other coms that give us 24 hour airmen in CONUS supporting the war fight, all the time down range. So those are the kinds of things that we're doing in the theater. If you get wounded in this theater, we operate several of the larger hospitals in the region. Your chances of survival are better than in any previous conflict in the history of the United States military. And you're entering an aero medical

evacuation system that gets you back to CONUS within a matter of days, depending on your medical condition.

So our Air Force is literally involved from the front to the back, and everything in between, in providing much of the glue that holds the joint operation together. And so our airmen are doing great, great work downrange.

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: Is there one more question before we end the session?

AUDIENCE: Secretary, do you mind commenting on Haiti?

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: Haiti?

SECRETARY DONLEY: If you think about where the Department of Defense, the joint team, the international multinational team stands, it's really only been one week since this devastating earthquake, one week from a standing start. And we have, I think, at this point about 350 airmen on the ground. The first tasks were to get the airfield open and operating, and we have done that successfully, got to the point where the average number of aircraft moving in and out of the Port-au-Prince airport during its commercial days pre-earthquake was somewhere between 30 and 50. It's now up over a hundred aircraft per day, so our airmen are doing tremendous work there.

Obviously, we're supporting the humanitarian side of this. We have been facilitating the air lift of the joint force into the theater, the Army, especially. The Navy has come in with the *Vincent* and marines are there. So the joint team has come together very quickly on short notice. Our Air Force team, as far as I can tell, is operating very effectively. We've had a 24/7 crisis action team up and operating, obviously, since the first day last week. We've had very good synergy as far as I can see between our tanker air lift control center at air mobility command out at Scott. First Air Force at Tyndall, which has the best air picture, actually, with the FAA of this part of the world, this immediate

neighborhood, and 12th Air Force, which is AV South, if you will, supporting the SOUTHCOM mission here.

So, again, hundreds and hundreds of airmen involved in this work from a standing start, getting lots of great support in. Every day, that gets better. Every day, those relationships get stronger. We're also providing ISR support. There has been global hawk support extended for the next several days, and there is additional ISR capability that's programmed to support this operation. So it's been a tremendous joint operation for the department and I would say, as usual, in these kinds of events, the U.S. military has in many ways led the way and set a very good standard for cooperation and rapid response with working with the rest of the international community.

DR. PFALTZGRAFF: This is the very best note on which we could end the session this evening. And on our collective behalf to thank Secretary Donley for being with us and sharing with us his vision of the future development of the Air Force. May I say that we will be of any help that we can as you plan for the future. And we hope that this conference will contribute to that process. So, thank you for being with us. [applause]

I should remind you that we reconvene promptly at nine p.m.-- It is nine p.m. I'm not even sure what time of the day it is. [laughter] But we reconvene promptly at nine a.m. to hear Deputy Secretary Lynn tomorrow morning. And, of course, there are refreshments here earlier. We hope that you'll get here much earlier than that, 8:00 perhaps. But in any event, thank you for the excellent questions and participation today. So we'll see you all early tomorrow morning. [applause]

END OF DINNER ADDRESS