

**AIR, SPACE, AND CYBERSPACE POWER IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**  
**38<sup>th</sup> IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security Strategy and Policy**

**January 20 – 21, 2010**

**DAY ONE**

**SESSION THREE**

***Finding the Appropriate Force Mix:  
Balancing Capabilities with Priorities***

**2:30 - 4:00 P.M.**

## **Dr. Thomas P. Ehrhard**

**DR. THOMAS P. EHRHARD:** Let's get started with our post-lunch panel. Welcome back, and again welcome, everyone to this important event for the Air Force and thank you for being in attendance today. And again, I'm Tom Ehrhard, special assistant to General Schwartz. And today, we have a very interesting panel for you that hopefully will accomplish what the chief's mandate was from this morning, which was to get us to think about the future security environment, think about what we need to be doing with the Air Force in the future, and try to outline some of the key elements of the debate about what we need to do going forward.

The title of this particular panel is interesting. It's called "Finding the Appropriate Force Mix: Balancing Capabilities with Priority." So right off the bat, you have two terms that are problematic. The first one is "appropriate." So what we'll do today, and job one, is to make sure we don't do anything that's inappropriate.

And the second term is balance. In the same way appropriate and inappropriate, the choice between the two is obvious, all of us want to have a balanced force. The problem

is everybody has a different idea about what balanced looks like. So, what we've done is assembled a group up here that is sure to disagree about that question for the purposes of, again, outlining the key elements of this debate so that we might begin to understand how the Air Force should move forward. And I think that's the key. It's a debate, and that's one of the key elements of thinking about the future, but it does hinge on what you believe about the future.

Before I introduce our speakers today, I want to just talk briefly about some of the things that they're going to talk about and frame them for you so we have sort of a common way of approaching this, really it hinges on what you believe about the future security environment. So how you come down on the issue of balance is critically a function of what you believe about the future security environment, and the future operating environment that is a function of that security environment. So, what do we think is going to happen in the future?

Now, we can be positive that the future is unknowable. But history is also a good teacher in that regard. History does not probably repeat itself, but it certainly rhymes. And oftentimes, it rhymes with the recent past in ways that can help us understand where we're going. And I want to outline two aspects of what Air Forces and this Air Force, the United States Air Force, has always done. And that is when they look to the future, they always think about two things: how can we best respond to the changes that we see coming? And secondarily, and perhaps most importantly, how can we shape what that future looks like? How can we be a part of shaping this future security environment in ways that are advantageous to the United States and our allies?

So those should be the ways that we begin to think in sort of broad terms about this future balance that we want to achieve within the Air Force. We're going to try to contain our views here today about the balance within the Air Force. There are larger questions about the balance within the Department of Defense and even you've heard a lot of words today about the balance within the U.S. government and between our allies. And I'm happy to see a very, very high powered panel later on composed of our most

important allies, some of the people that are best able to talk to us, give us their perspectives, their differing perspectives about where the United States Air Force is going in the future.

So my only admonition for the panel is that strategy should guide our way here. Our ideas about what the future holds and how we should approach it. It should be a strategic argument. And that's what strategy is. At the end of the day, it's always an argument, it's always a debate, and our main purpose today is to have a good one.

With that, I want to introduce the panel. This is a panel that you could give any the topic on the future of defense and they could launch off on a good 10 or 15 minute dissertation without any preparation at all, and that's why they're up here. First, I want to introduce Lieutenant General Dave Deptula, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance. He's going to set the stage for us today and sort of kick it off with a larger framing of the issues that we're going to tackle today.

Right behind him is Major General Darren McDew, who's the Vice Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, J5, the Joint Staff. General McDew has got another formulation from his post on the Joint Staff about what the future security environment looks like, and possibly how the Air Force might want to think about his future force mix.

Right behind him is Dave Ochmanek. Dave and I have known each other for many, many years and right now he serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Development and has the scars to show for it. [laughter] Dave has been a very, very important individual in the formulation of the Quadrennial Defense Review, which you've heard a lot about and we'll see on 1 February, they tell us. And Dave is always provocative, always a fresh outlook on this. As you can read with his many publications that he produced prior to come back into government for the second time at least, right, Dave?



Should it mirror the active? Specifically, as resources become tighter, can we afford to equip the ARC as stand alone force projection outfits when the maximum and during deployment posture is only 1:4 or 1:5? Should we instead focus the ARC on different missions as we are with remotely piloted vehicles such as nuclear security, homeland defense or cyber?

**DR. EHRHARD:** Does anyone want to take that one?

**MR. THOMAS:** Yes. We could elaborate on it, but I think your comment, question, gets to the heart of it. And as we move to the future where we have greater and greater constraints on our personnel, we ought to incorporate our reserve component in an optimum fashion where the mission sets make sense. And those that require less deployment are a perfect fit for the ARC in some of the missions that you mentioned. And that we're jumping in with two feet to do that. But the Director of the Air National Guard was in my office the other day and we were talking about greater incorporation of National Guard folks doing the remotely piloted aircraft mission, as well as the distributed common ground station analytic back end piece. A perfect match that will truly take us to the next level of total force integration.

**DR. EHRHARD:** Thanks, sir. Another question? Go ahead.

**AUDIENCE:** Sky Forrester from the Eisenhower Center of Space and Defense Studies at the Air Force Academy. Couple of references to commercialization, particularly as it relates to space. The reality is, as you all know, a substantial percentage of our capability, information flows, communications, comes from non-U.S. government assets in space, commercialization. To what extent is the commercial sector part of this consideration of what our own space assets ought to be, or are we still predominantly thinking about DOD and Air Force space assets and kind of leaving that to fend for itself? The thousand ship Navy is a bad metaphor, but there may be something-- there's some element of that that might be interesting to pursue. I'd be interested in your comments.

**DR. EHRHARD:** I can say the space posture review is another one of the reviews that we're sort of waiting to come out. But I do know they've addressed that and we don't really have the right people up here, perhaps, to deal directly with that question. But it always has been a part of how we think about space and the difficulty is that it changes over time. For a while there, it looked like there wasn't going to be a lot of capacity in space toward the end of the '90s. Some of the systems, Iridium, et cetera, were not very successful. So it makes it a very difficult planning challenge to understand just how much capacity is going to be out there. Now we see private, commercial companies getting into even some pretty high fidelity imagery-type work. So there can be no question that just like in aviation, air power is a larger part of both military and commercial and civil. The same thing applies to space.

I will just say this. Once again, when you start talking about force mix, you have to ask in an era of such constrained resources and the different kinds of challenges that all the speakers talked about here, you have to ask yourself, what is your core capability? What are really the things that you have to have in the U.S. military? And some of the challenges that were talking about here are not easy ones. They have to do with the fact that there's going to be growing challenges to unfettered access and exploitation of space. So there is no doubt about the fact that this, it's changing rapidly, what the composition of those space assets are. But we have to ask serious questions about when you fall back and you're dealing with a bandwidth constrained environment, for instance. What are those pieces that we have to have as military assets up there that do specific jobs for us and going forward the space mix?

Let me just add one other challenge to that. General Deptula deals with ISR every day. And there are huge issues dealing with the space and air mix, as well, and how we hedge against a future, more contested environment in both domains and how we balance those two capabilities. So there's no question about the fact that commercial assets are being used today. They're a critical part of all those predator caps and reper caps that we're running every day, those commercial bandwidth paths. And so they've

just become a part of the way we do business, and I don't think that's going to change in the near future.

I want to get off the stage now, we have Secretary Carter, is going to be speaking to you in a minute. I want to thank the speakers again for their words today, and hope we gave you something to think about when it comes to the future force mix for the Air Force. Thank you very much.

END OF SESSION III