



AIR COMBAT COMMAND
STRATEGIC PLAN



2014



SECURING THE
HIGH GROUND

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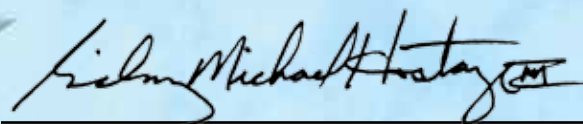
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FOREWORD

This 2014 Air Combat Command Strategic Plan is my two-fold guidance to: (1) optimally organize, train, equip, and provide combat ready forces and (2) manage and develop the capabilities required to secure the high ground for our military forces to deliver dominant combat airpower for our Nation. This guidance is provided at a difficult time as Air Combat Command confronts challenging fiscal limits to the continued pursuit of our legacy of excellence. Current budgetary constraints affect our ability to sufficiently organize, train, equip, and provide Air Combat Command forces to meet the needs of the Joint warfighter and ensure the security of the American people. This challenge will likely continue, and possibly intensify until our elected leaders address the national debt and the resulting fiscal implications. At the same time, these challenges are no more daunting than those faced by Arnold, Doolittle, or Kenney during World War II. As they did in a different time, our Airmen must meet today's challenges with innovative solutions in order to continue to provide dominant combat airpower for our nation.

While the Nation and the Air Force deal with our fiscal challenges, I want ACC Airmen to focus on the fact that you – our Airmen – make us the most dominant, capable, and lethal air force on the planet. Our air, space, and cyber systems and capabilities are the envy of the world, but America's Air Force holds this position because we empower the finest, most innovative Airmen the world has ever seen. Together we must ensure we retain the lead. As we transition to a smaller Air Force, we will acquire new capabilities that will make us more capable, more lethal, and more ready to meet the Nation's security needs. We are entering an era where American dominance in the skies cannot be taken for granted. Your tenacity, creativity, honor, and courage will continue to be the keys to our ability to fly, fight, and win...today and tomorrow.

Thank you for your service to our Nation and all that you do for Air Combat Command.



GILMARY M. HOSTAGE III
General, United States Air Force
Commander, Air Combat Command

PURPOSE



An F-22 Raptor receiving fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker.

Securing the High Ground articulates the guiding principles and foundational ideas for providing America with dominant combat airpower. Within the context of the current strategic and fiscal environments, these principles guide the transformation of today's Air Force into the Air Force of tomorrow. There are two main lines of effort in this document to achieve this objective:

1. Provide guidance from Commander, Air Combat Command (COMACC) to optimally organize, train, equip, and provide combat ready forces for America.
2. Provide Core Function Lead (CFL) strategic guidance for the stewardship and maturation of the five Air Force Service Core Functions (SCF) for which COMACC has responsibility.

From the MAJCOM perspective, Securing the High Ground links National, Department of Defense, Joint Staff, and Air Force strategic guidance with ACC operations. It works within the current fiscal realities and deliberately guards against becoming a hollow force. The Air Force tasks ACC as the service conventional combat force provider in charge of developing recommendations to the SecDef on the optimum use of all Air Force conventional combat forces for Combatant Commander (CCDR) capability requests. In addition, this Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that the inevitably smaller force over the coming years is highly capable, adequately resourced, and ready to meet the Joint Force Commanders' requirements. Most importantly, this guidance is a message to ACC Airmen on where and how they contribute to mission success.

From the CFL perspective, Securing the High Ground provides the strategic context and guidance necessary to shape ACC and CFL planning, programming, requirements, and science and technology (S&T) priorities. These critical inputs ensure comprehensive and balanced contributions to the Air Force Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process.

Securing the High Ground is a capstone document that frames the ACC mission and the Core Function construct. When cross-referenced with Core Function Support Plans (CFSP), Securing the High Ground is the articulation of an innovative strategy where ACC appropriately links ends, ways, and means to achieve our ultimate goal—delivering dominant combat airpower for America through the Joint Force.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Today's global strategic environment is incredibly complex, dynamic, and unpredictable and presents a wide array of opportunities, challenges, and threats to the United States and the international community. Worrisome trends, such as accelerating globalization, natural resource competition, shifting demographics, Weapons of Mass Destruction proliferation, and increased access to information technology, combined with the relative rise of new geographic spheres of power and influence and the continued threat of terrorism, pose significant risk to the national defense and successful execution of the Air Force mission. These trends create challenges and opportunities for future Air Force operations:

- Potential adversaries (to include non-state actors) are acquiring or developing the means to challenge the U.S. military and threaten the U.S. homeland
- Future conflicts may take place in a more highly contested environment due to adversaries likely employing anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) strategies
- The demand for certain types of operations (especially those associated with irregular warfare, humanitarian operations, special operations, information gathering, and urban operations) will likely increase in frequency or importance
- Effective deterrence is expected to become more challenging for the United States
- Energy costs are expected to rise, which will further complicate fiscal challenges
- Opportunities, in the form of evolving alliances and new technologies, will also present themselves



B-1 Lancer

In addition to the external pressures generated by the global strategic environment, the U.S. domestic environment generates unique, but equally influential, internal pressures on the Air Force. Most prominent, the growing U.S. national debt and corresponding fiscal repercussions present a grave threat to our national security. More than two decades of combat operations around the globe have imposed considerable stress on our Airmen and equipment. At the same time, the economic means the Nation relies upon to fund our global security posture are becoming increasingly constrained. Even more concerning, the specter of future budget cuts remain. Therefore, the calculus under which we made past decisions has changed. Furthermore, as good stewards of taxpayer dollars, we must balance current and future decisions and implement sound, innovative choices that maximize combat capability within the context of our present fiscal environment.

Despite the dynamic fiscal and security environments, ACC will continue to posture our force to remain highly capable and ready to meet any challenge. We must remain flexible and adaptable as an organization and establish an underlying culture that remains optimistic and seeks opportunity out of austerity. Although we cannot predict with certainty the time, location, or circumstance in which U.S. policy-makers will call for the use of military power, we must continue to prepare to respond. National fiscal constraints will likely drive reductions in the size of our force, which may result in fewer resources available in fewer places. However, we remain focused on improving the readiness and operational effectiveness of the forces we retain to preserve our ability to provide dominant combat airpower across the broad spectrum of military conflict.



AIR COMBAT COMMAND IN 2014

In June 2013, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force issued a new vision for the Air Force, one committed to Airmen, Mission, and Innovation. Within this framework, ACC is committed to accomplishing the Air Force mission to Fly, Fight, and Win.

AIRMEN



ACC VISION

Warrior Airmen, committed to excellence, trained and ready to fly, fight, and win...anytime, anyplace.

Develop, Retain, and Care for Airmen and Their Families: The men and women of Air Combat Command are the most sophisticated and precious resource we possess. Only with Airmen's flexibility and ingenuity, honed through comprehensive training, combined with their unwavering warrior spirit, can ACC generate the warfighting capability, capacity, and readiness necessary to meet U.S. national security demands. All ACC Airmen, including Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilians, must create an environment that enables every member to achieve their full potential while providing them with a sense of dignity and honor for their selfless service to our Nation. Therefore, ACC will continue prioritizing activities that provide deliberate development and promote resiliency along with the required equipment, training, and skills to accomplish our mission. Similarly, we continue efforts to improve the care of our Airmen and their families by providing proactive and responsive family support systems at all levels.



“Airman as Wingman”: Air Combat Command Airmen must take care of each other, and we continue to support the “Airman as Wingman” concept. Our Airmen are the lifeblood of this command. The smaller our force becomes, the more critical each individual Airman becomes. We cannot tolerate anything in our culture that reduces our Airmen's ability to be 100% ready. Sexual assault, illegal drug use, and self-defeating behavior (including suicide) are three systemic threats that attack and destroy our Airmen, their families, and combat capability. We cannot sit on the sidelines as bystanders and watch a fellow Airman destroy their own or another's life—we must actively intervene when we see a problem. Being a good Wingman, and accepting support from the Wingmen around you, creates a culture of success where innovation, creativity, and mission-focus have the opportunity to flourish in order to provide dominant combat airpower.

AIRMAN AS WINGMAN

Air Combat Command Airmen must take care of each other, and we continue to support the “Airman as Wingman” concept. Our Airmen are the lifeblood of this command.

MISSION


ACC MISSION – Dominant combat airpower for America

ACC organizes, trains, and equips combat-ready forces to provide dominant combat airpower in support of national security strategy implementation.



Responsive Conventional Force Provision: SecAF tasks ACC to make global allocation nominations for all Air Force conventional forces in response to validated CCDR requirements. We execute this responsibility by weighing capability, readiness, and operational and personnel tempos of active and reserve component forces to ensure the right mix of Combat Air Force (CAF) capabilities to meet the global requirement. Close coordination with component MAJCOMs ensures we minimize seams between CCDR expectations and the force delivered for their warfighting needs.

Train for a broad spectrum of conflict: Our Nation expects its combat air forces to prevent, deter, and defend against aggression aimed at America and its allies, and when called upon, to help secure victory regardless of the type of conflict. We must be ready to engage in a highly contested environment while retaining the experience gained over the past 12 years of counterinsurgency and joint warfare. We

cannot lose the finesse required to prosecute the unconventional fight, nor the elegance of joint warfighting. At the same time, we anticipate our potential adversaries' capabilities will continue to grow as they concentrate on mitigating our decisive advantage—driving the need to focus our training on those skill sets required to win in highly contested environments. We require dominant airpower to survive and operate in those environments or else face neutralization in the earliest stages of conflict. At the end of the day, our success rests on the quality of combat airpower we provide to the CCDRs. Therefore, we will ensure we continue to pursue a dominant suite of capabilities within the constraints and realities of the current fiscal environment to meet CCDR requirements and maintain readiness levels that will allow us to respond to taskings across the broad spectrum of conflict. The challenge to the Airmen of ACC is to make sure they are trained and ready to fight anytime, anyplace.

Improve operational effectiveness and increase integration of Air Force, Joint, Allied, and Coalition partners:

To fight and win in today's and in future conflicts, especially in contested environments, we must team with our Joint, Allied, and Coalition partners to tackle our collective challenges. We cannot overcome times of global fiscal constraint by retreating into an Air Force centric worldview. We cannot and will not become a parochial force. ACC takes their obligations to America's Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines seriously, and we must continue to strengthen the collaborative efforts within our Service and beyond. We must cultivate stronger partnerships with our Joint, Allied, and Coalition teams to capitalize on the synergy created by our combined resources in providing timely, comprehensive, and appropriately scaled combat airpower. These are not just materiel solutions, but solutions involving doctrine, organization, training, planning, resourcing, and requirements. We are getting smaller—partnering for greater combat capability can and will help.



F-35 Lightning II

“One Wing, One Boss, One Fight”: Our Total Air Force is unified under the SecAF in three components: Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. We are all Airmen, and we are one force. The Total Force succeeds only when the components work together in unison. Our long-term vision for the Combat Air Force is one team comprised of Airmen—some full-time, some part-time—functioning as an integrated whole. Despite legal, cultural, and leadership challenges to this vision, we will continue to take steps to make Total Force Integration a reality where “One Wing, One Boss, One Fight” will exist as the model for our in-garrison Air Force. While we do not plan to introduce organizational turmoil into existing Total Force Initiatives that are already working well, we will work to build a culture that supports unified action. In time, as our force develops and barriers impeding effective integration disappear, we will succeed in becoming an integrated Air Force.

Our Total Air Force is unified under the SecAF in three components: Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard.

INNOVATION



INNOVATION

Airmen embracing innovation will deliver dominant combat airpower for America

Readiness: The fiscal environment has pushed our Air Force closer to the edge of becoming a hollow force and has reduced the Command’s ability to adequately train and equip our Airmen. Our ability to fully fund recapitalization and readiness is challenged and we must work to strike a balance to meet mission requirements. The pressure to recapitalize aging fleets and develop critical capabilities will make it increasingly important for our Airmen to think creatively and to develop innovative solutions to near-term shortfalls. Readiness is not optional—we must ensure we are ready to fly, fight, and win whenever the Nation calls.

Realistic Training: As the tactical environment becomes more highly contested, it is increasingly difficult to provide realistic adversaries and environments for live training. Further, our ability to hide our counter-tactics from our adversaries is also more difficult in the live-fly arena. This drives the need to flip the realistic training paradigm. Physical aircraft and live-flying continue to be important, but can no longer be the primary training environment for the high-end fight. The aircraft, and other hands-on training, will continue to provide basic “blocking and tackling” skills. The virtual and constructive environment will become the primary method for advanced training in all aircraft, not just our 5th-generation assets. We will also explore the Live-Virtual-Constructive (LVC) approach across all career fields in order to optimize training. ACC cannot afford to waste valuable resources and must focus on new, efficient ways of doing business.

Leverage Technology Assets: We must use all available avenues for research and development within the Air Force to focus those resources on advancing our most critical capability shortfalls. Air Combat Command will continue to work closely with Air Force Research Laboratories and the acquisition community to address these gaps, but because of the pressure on our Science and Technology portfolios, the need for strong industry partnerships has never been greater. We must utilize every means necessary to develop the future force. The Air Force will be smaller, but science and technology will make it stronger.



FUTURE GLOBAL POWER/VIGILANCE FORCES



CFL VISION

Fully developed capabilities across the C2, GIISR, AS, GPA, and PR Core Functions

COMACC's roles and responsibilities as Core Function Lead transcend MAJCOM Commander duties to organize, train, equip, and provide forces. COMACC is the Core Function Lead for the following five Service Core Functions:

- Command and Control (C2)
- Global Integrated Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (GIISR)
- Air Superiority (AS)
- Global Precision Attack (GPA)
- Personnel Recovery (PR)



CORE FUNCTION SUPPORT PLANS

Each of the twelve Service Core Functions are supported by Core Function Support Plans developed and approved by one of seven CFLs. CFSPs translate the vision for the specific Core Function into risk-informed, resource-constrained planning force proposals that guide follow-on Program Objective Memorandum (POM) and Science and Technology (S&T) activities. In addition, Special Access Program (SAP) CFSPs are developed, which supplement many of these CFSPs, ensuring all programs are considered as a coherent whole.

CFL STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

The Core Function Lead is responsible for taking an enterprise-level view of Air Force capabilities to benefit the Air Force as a whole. When these five SCFs are integrated with the others, they provide a ready, agile, and deployable force with the capacity and capability to secure freedom of action in air, space, and cyberspace to deliver Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power for our Nation across the broad spectrum of conflict now and in the future.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

There are four overarching principles that guide the work of our Core Functions:

1. Recap over Refurbishment
2. Prevent “Hollow Force”
3. Accept short term risk for long-term capability
4. Whole, integrated approach – must account for all programs, including Special Access

Recap, Refurb, Resize: As a whole, these four principles reduce to “Recap, Refurb, Resize.” We have had to make some tough choices about the future of our Air Force. Over the past two years, the Air Force has had to cut viable programs in order to recapitalize some critical waning capabilities to ensure future effectiveness. When necessary, we will continue to sacrifice capacity for the capabilities we need to win in the highly contested environment. At the same time, we believe we must continue to replace our legacy fleets or selectively refurbish elements of them through upgrades designed to extend service life or enhance combat capabilities. While the Air Force has found it difficult to fund 4th-generation fighter refurbishment, it remains an important component of sustaining viable capacity in the contested environment. Further in the future, we may need to reorient missions to extend the lifespan and capacity of the Reserve component.

While struggling to maintain sufficient capacity to meet CCDR requirements in the near-term, no matter how much we refurbish our 4th-generation assets, they will still be overmatched in the highly contested environment in the mid-term. This, coupled with the concerns of an aging fleet means when faced with the choice between recapitalization and refurbishment, we will work to recap our fleets. This may lead to capacity risk as we get smaller, especially in the near term. The alternative is arriving in the middle of the next decade with a now 45-year old fighter and bomber fleet that is neither tactically relevant nor capable of providing sufficient Global Power, and an industrial base that has withered away.

CORE FUNCTIONS

Command and Control (C2)



An E-3 Sentry AWACS aircraft takes off from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Purpose: C2 is the Core Function primarily responsible for providing Decision Superiority to the global force. In order to achieve decision superiority, Airmen employ C2 capabilities through robust, adaptable, and survivable C2 systems. These systems rely on access to reliable and trustworthy communications and information networks across a range of joint military operations and environments.

Challenges: The AF needs to develop resilient C2 capabilities to maintain decision quality and speed that are superior to those of the adversary in highly contested environments. Recapitalization and refurbishment of existing programs and acquisition of new capabilities to maintain a technological edge will challenge a C2 enterprise that is highly dependent upon advancements in communications, sensors, computer processing, and presentation of information.

Priorities: To accomplish this AF Core Function, we will synchronize efforts to recapitalize, refurbish, and upgrade our strategic, operational, and tactical C2 systems and sensors to maintain decision superiority optimized for 5th-generation operations. Additionally, C2 will refocus on a “Centralized Command - Distributed Control - Decentralized Execution” as our response to better enable agile C2 in a highly contested environment. How we organize, adapt, and train will determine our ability to project synchronized, persistent airpower into a contested environment. Finally, we must continue to encourage an Air Force culture that

enables units to act following commander intent when a contested environment prevents specific instructions or directions. We must educate our leaders on the art of command—including communicating intent early.

Global Integrated ISR (GIISR)



RQ-4 Global Hawk

Purpose: GIISR is the Core Function primarily responsible for providing Decision Advantage and Precision Attack to the Joint Force. To do this, GIISR must possess capabilities to effectively access targets of interest, define targets and their location in time and space in relation to adversary threats, and characterize the battlespace. The GIISR enterprise conducts operations to validate knowledge, test theories, and discover unknowns in order to enhance warfighter readiness, and combat systems, and support future weapons system development. In this regard, GIISR enhances airpower kill-chains and is essential to Global Power.

Challenges: Given the increasing sophistication of the threat and a focus on the current permissive environment, GIISR has become increasingly disconnected from Global Power. Our main challenge is to build a range-balanced, cross-domain (air, space, cyber), agile, and integrated force that can deliver decision advantage across the range of military operations and threat environments.

Priorities: To accomplish this AF Core Function, the GIISR force must more accurately match its capabilities to requirements—reorienting toward the high-end fight in order to prevail in a highly contested environment. To that end, our priorities center on penetrating and standoff sensors to access the target, time-sensitive targeting and analytic tools, a secure information exchange to and from the tactical edge, and a renewed emphasis in realistic ISR training.

Air Superiority (AS)

Purpose: AS is the Core Function primarily responsible for providing the Joint Force the freedom to operate in contested environments. Air Superiority accomplishes this mission by protecting Joint Forces from enemy air attack and Integrated Air Defenses.

Challenges: In the near-to-mid-term, a rapid evolution of threat capabilities, as well as a lack of procurement funding for our most critical air-to-air weapons, have degraded AS kill chains. At the same time, potential adversaries are expanding the density and lethality of their Integrated Air Defenses, creating more highly contested environments. These evolutions are outpacing our ability to recapitalize and refurbish Air Superiority assets.

Priorities: To repair our kill chains in the near-to-mid-term we need to increase the quantity and effectiveness of our air-to-air weapons, selectively refurbish 4th-generation aircraft, and keep 5th-generation assets fully capable in the face of an evolving threat. At the same time, long acquisition timelines dictate that we begin now to understand and develop the capabilities required to achieve far-term air superiority in the highly contested A2/AD environment. This will likely involve recapitalizing aircraft and weapons.



F-22 Raptor

Global Precision Attack (GPA)



An F-35 Lightning II performs a night flight.

Purpose: GPA is the Core Function primarily responsible for providing Global Power to the Joint Force. We accomplish this function by ensuring we have the ability to hold targets at risk and strike rapidly and persistently with a wide range of munitions to create swift, decisive, and precise effects across multiple domains.

Challenges: Legacy GPA fleets will be overmatched in the mid-term in a highly contested environment. Balancing the capability to prevail against a near-peer competitor or conducting two overlapping regional conflicts requires a clear understanding of risk and a sound budget strategy.

Priorities: In the near-term, we must continue to transition to a more survivable predominantly 5th-generation fighter force through the procurement of the F-35 Lightning II at program of record rates to ensure success in future

advanced threat environments. Likewise, we must continue to develop the Long Range Strike Bomber to, in the mid-term, present a relevant bomber fleet. Finally, we must continue to focus on a mix of preferred weapons which, when fully integrated with these delivery platforms, offer a superior level of survivability and standoff range required to mitigate risk, irrespective of the scenario.

Personnel Recovery (PR)

Purpose: PR is the Core Function primarily responsible for the mission of rescuing isolated personnel. The Air Force has highly capable, dedicated rescue forces that execute Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), the preferred method of rescue and recovery. Air Force rescue forces also make up part of the joint personnel recovery system in which all services and Special Operations provide the overlapping force required to protect at-risk personnel.

Challenges: PR faces two significant challenges. In the near-term, conducting personnel recovery operations in a highly contested environment is beyond the capability of our conventional CSAR Task Force. In addition to capability, PR is equally challenged to sustain sufficient capacity to support current and future CCDR requirements.

Priorities: We must find innovative, unconventional approaches to enhance our conventional PR capability. Rescue forces must continue to be tightly linked to other conventional combat air forces to ensure dedicated support. We will continue to sustain and refurbish the PR triad, consisting of the HC-130, HH-60, and the Guardian Angel family of systems and begin the recapitalization of the Combat Rescue Helicopter.



HC-130J



A pararescueman fast ropes from an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter.

SUMMARY

Our task is clear: Provide warrior Airmen trained, equipped, and ready to fly, fight, and win America's wars when and where called upon to do so. The ability to provide dominant combat airpower underpins our Nation's ability to pursue and protect its vital interests, and without it, other military options and instruments of power become less credible.

A unique bond binds all of us – military and civilian – who have chosen to serve our Nation; we are the protectors, the guardians of freedom. With our shared purpose, together we will build upon ACC's record of excellence and continue to make informed, deliberate choices as we organize, train, equip, and provide combat ready forces for the Air Force of tomorrow. We are still the finest combat air force in the world—one that can, and will win. We will secure the high ground for America.





AIRMEN MISSION INNOVATION



ACRONYMS



ACC	Air Combat Command
AS	Air Superiority
A2/AD	Anti-Access and Area Denial
CAF	Combat Air Force
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CFL	Core Function Lead
CFSP	Core Function Support Plan
COMACC	Commander, Air Combat Command
CSAR	Combat Search and Rescue
C2	Command and Control
GIISR	Global Integrated Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
GPA	Global Precision Attack
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
LVC	Live, Virtual, and Constructive
MAJCOM	Major Command
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PPBE	Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution
PR	Personnel Recovery
SAP	Special Access Program
SCF	Service Core Function
SecAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SecDef	Secretary of Defense
S&T	Science and Technology



2014
AIR COMBAT COMMAND
STRATEGIC PLAN

Live



Virtual

Constructive