



# CHIEF's Sight Picture

10 Jul 2002

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## **CORONA Top 2002**

This year's CORONA Top was a true leadership gathering. The conference was held in conjunction with the Air Force's Transformation Summit which included representatives from industry, the political arena, and government.

One of our guest speakers, Herb Kelleher, President of Southwest Airlines told the audience that "only in change is there security," highlighting the reality that those who fail to adapt face an unenviable future. Another guest, Newt Gingrich, challenged us to "set very big goals with short timelines and delegate the authority to achieve those goals," emphasizing the ability to create your future through proactive involvement. Mark Herman, from Booz Allen & Hamilton reminded the audience that "transformation was a journey rather than a destination," underlying the fact that we must embrace change and the opportunities it provides. This open and candid forum validated many of the initiatives our Air Force is undertaking as we continue our journey to a bright and promising future.

One aspect of the post-September environment is the reality that we are no longer experiencing surge operations; rather, we are faced with a new, higher standard of operations tempo. And while our operational rhythm will fluctuate with world events, it is unlikely we will return to a pre-September level. Given this new reality, our success hinges on the ability to meet our future head-on. This requires a responsive, agile, and deployable force, presented in the form of the AEF. Flexibility is a key element of our rich heritage and will remain so in the future.

### **Proactive Adjustments**

Unfortunately, our past success guarantees nothing, further it can potentially stifle creative thought. The Air Force can ill afford to merely stand by and watch the future play out. We must proactively engage those areas within our control to maintain our combat effectiveness. Several such areas were addressed at CORONA Top.

One opportunity before us is to expand the number of USAF members included in our deployment UTCs and to ensure that, to the extent possible, we deploy our forces as units as opposed to the piece meal fashion with which we have become all too familiar. We must develop properly sized UTCs for everything we do. This does two things: it provides all Airmen the opportunity to participate in our worldwide commitments, and it helps decrease the demand on those Airmen who are currently carrying more than their share of our deployment burden.

This effort will mesh with our "burn-down" plan to further reduce the impact of Stop Loss and to facilitate the demobilization of our Guard and Reserve professionals,

allowing them to return to their pre 9-11 lives. Another key element is ensuring our deployed forces return to their home units upon completion of assigned tasks.

The demands on our deployed forces are increasingly dynamic. We will continue to emphasize training that guarantees our airmen are prepared to deploy fully mission capable, and ready to hit the ground running upon arrival at the deployed location. These efforts will dramatically enhance the capability of one of our most dynamic weapons systems, the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC).

### **Capabilities Focus**

The USAF is leading DoD's effort to transition from a program-centric focus to one based on capabilities and effects. We are taking transformational steps to maximize our warfighting capabilities. These include the standup of the Combat Wing Organization, the development of capabilities-based CONOPs, and changing the way we plan, program, and budget for the future.

Each of our six CONOPs continues to development through dedicated efforts of our MAJCOM and Air Staff champions. This increased fidelity ensures our ability to correctly prioritize funding.

Since the Air Force draws its capabilities from the AEF, our MAJCOMs must continue to align their forces with contingency operations to maximize operational effectiveness. These efforts provide greater warfighting flexibility.

### **Seamless Integration**

We continue to emphasize the seamless integration of manned, unmanned, and space systems. It is through such integration that we achieve the greatest return on our investment in our warfighting capabilities. These integration efforts include fully integrating combat, mobility, and space forces into Joint Synthetic Battlespace simulations; creating "Red-Flag-like" training for our Mission Support Group commanders; and designating a greater role for ARC forces in the CAOC.

As DoD's Executive Agent for space, the Air Force has a responsibility to properly integrate space operations into DoD's warfighting structure. This will necessitate a far-reaching vision which will be closely monitored by our sister services and other organizations interested in space operations.

### **Conclusion**

CORONA Top was an excellent vector check as we chart our course to remain the world's premier air and space power. America's adversaries have demonstrated their willingness to challenge us both at home and abroad—make no mistake, the threat is real. Our nation's security can only be guaranteed through the dedication of its military professionals. The challenge before us is to proactively shape our future. America's freedom depends on it.

