



An Expeditionary Language

At the beginning of the 21st Century the United States faces a dynamic and evolving security environment. America's security is now truly a global issue and the men and women of the United States Air Force are tasked to meet that challenge. We find ourselves executing an expeditionary concept that focuses us on the business of rapid deployment in response to conditions ranging from humanitarian assistance to full-scale conflict. The expeditionary air and space force concept describes who we are today and where we're going tomorrow.

Post-September 11th operations reinforce the reality that future missions and contingencies will require greater sophistication and understanding of our international security environment. Just as we need pilots, intelligence specialists, satellite operators, and jet engine mechanics, our expeditionary force requires airmen with international insight, foreign language proficiency, and cultural understanding. Recent operations underscore our need to establish a cadre of professionals proficient in foreign languages and area studies—men and women who have the right skill sets to shape events and rapidly respond to world-wide contingencies. These international skills are true force multipliers and essential to our ability to operate globally.

Developing such a global cadre will require a much-needed "culture change." To that end, I strongly encourage the pursuit of such skill sets and experiences through regional/international studies degree programs, foreign languages, and overseas assignments. I expect commanders to fully support and emphasize the importance of this to their charges. To be truly successful at sustaining coalitions, pursuing regional stability, and contributing to multi-national operations, our expeditionary forces must have sufficient capability and depth in foreign area expertise and language skills.

I urge each of you to develop tomorrow's expeditionary airmen. America's security depends upon it.

