

INDIVISIBLE GLOBAL REACH-GLOBAL POWER

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Five years ago, in response to the dynamic and rapid changes in the international security environment, the Air Force published Global Reach-Global Power. It was--and is--a powerful statement of how aerospace forces' unique characteristics--speed, range, and flexibility coupled with unprecedented precision and lethality--contribute to safeguarding vital U.S. interests. Today aerospace forces are providing critical contributions to the national military strategy.

A regional focus has replaced the decades-old fixation on the NATO-Warsaw Pact situation. Providing collective security in a truly fragmented world where the location of the next troublespot is uncertain, plays directly to the strengths of aerospace forces. The ability of aerospace forces to monitor activities and potential hotspots anywhere in the world and then respond to those hotspots within a matter of hours is a principle key to U.S. security. Aerospace forces contribute to forward presence, deterrence, and crisis response. Beyond this, aerospace forces provide us with rapid responses to build influence and extend a helping hand anywhere in the world.

The ability to display presence also promotes national influence as well. And provides access, builds regional coalitions and collective security, promotes stability, deters aggression, and provides initial crisis-response capabilities. Aerospace forces' ability to concentrate rapidly in a very responsive manner over a great distance is a key attribute of aerospace power .

Aerospace power is an indivisible concept. No single entity or command is solely responsible for a "part" of aerospace power. Both reach and power are inseparable aspects of the same single entity--aerospace power. And, in today's environment, the proper employment of aerospace power doesn't necessarily mean putting "bombs on target;" rather, it can mean extending a helping hand through the employment of aerospace forces--either by delivering food and medical supplies to the needy in the Commonwealth of Independent States in Operation PROVIDE HOPE, or airlifting specialized firefighting equipment to battle fires raging in Uzbekistani oil fields. Aerospace power is used every day to attain diplomatic and humanitarian goals in support of our national security objectives.

Aerospace power is also proving its usefulness in even other new arenas. For example, peacekeeping missions are becoming an important aspect of our national security objectives--and aerospace power is there. When the United Nations asked for help in the Rwanda crises--aerospace power was there--delivering life-saving food and water purification equipment in a matter of hours. When President George Bush directed the withdrawal of U.S. stockpiles of nuclear weapons from overseas--aerospace power was there--flying nuclear artillery shells, Lance missile warheads, and nuclear depth bombs from overseas. When President Bush ordered the deployment of U.S. forces in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD, aerospace power was there--within 24 hours, squadrons of F-15s had deployed to the region and were flying defensive patrols. In fact, between 1970 and 1992, aerospace forces engaged in only 7 combat operations,

while engaging in 42 presence missions and shows of force, 84 air movements of national influence, and 197 humanitarian missions. When a disaster occurs, when medical evacuation is needed, when the flag needs to be shown in the heart of Africa, when the United Nations calls for help--global reach and global power is there. Aerospace forces have become the highly visible United States presence throughout the world. These forces are not limited by distance and geographical barriers.

The United States is the world's foremost aerospace power. The Air Force has capabilities second to none. The world today, and the world of the future is and will be marked by crises and conflicts. U.S. military forces will have to be involved in those which affect our national security interests. Aerospace forces are always ready to respond in a timely manner to a crisis and thus provide the nation with the ability to promote regional security and stability. The Cold War world demanded that our national military strategy be capable of containment--this new era demands that we be capable of shaping the security environment we find ourselves in. Global reach and global power allows us to shape our alliances, assure a favorable security climate, and respond quickly to crises that arise without warning. Aerospace power has become the most effective and economical means of responding to our national security needs.

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