

VOLUME 3

# AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK



U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY RALPH BRANSON



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**“CHINA,  
CHINA,  
CHINA.”**

Hon Frank Kendall,  
SECAF, on his  
priorities

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# Strategic Communications Playbook

***Synchronize and align ANG communication efforts and messaging at all levels to advance national, department, service, National Guard Bureau, and ANG priorities***

## ANG Mission

As the primary combat-ready reserve of the Air Force, the Air National Guard provides mission-ready Airmen to safeguard the homeland, serve our communities, and to execute global operations.

## ANG Vision

As an integral part of the Joint Force, we are focused on:

- **READY AIRMEN—READY FORCES:** Provide manned, trained, equipped, and cohesive units ready to meet the demands of our Combatant Commanders and Governors.
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Build relationships internally and externally through trust, transparency, and communication.
- **PEOPLE:** Recruit and invest in a diverse, physically, and mentally resilient workforce; recognize and retain talent; and achieve a sustainable family, military service, and employer balance.
- **POLICY:** Improve our efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating redundancies and mission distractors and enabling our Airmen to find and implement innovative solutions.
- **FORCE STRUCTURE:** Employ modern and interoperable equipment, systems, and processes that are deployable, sustainable, and overmatch current and future threats, through concurrent and proportional recapitalization and modernization.

***The ANG delivers trained, ready, and lethal forces to defend the homeland and defeat aggression in any AOR immediately.***

# The National Defense Strategy

*“We must ensure that the Air Force and Space Force are optimized to provide integrated deterrence, support campaigning, and ensure enduring advantage.”*  
SECAF

## Air Force’s Three Tasks:

1. Defend the US
2. Safeguard & Steward 2/3 of Nuclear Triad
3. Project Airpower Across the Globe

## Air Force Core Functions:

1. Air Superiority
2. Global Strike
3. Rapid Global Mobility
4. Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance
5. Command & Control

## Cross Cutting Enablers:

1. EMSO
2. Munitions
3. Mobility
4. Ops Test & Training

## National Defense Strategy (NDS) Four Priorities

1. Defend the homeland
2. Deter strategic attack against the United States, allies, and partners
3. Deter, and if necessary, defeat regional aggression
4. Build a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem

## Advance of Our Priorities Through:

- **Integrated deterrence:** Seamless integration of the elements of the Joint Force with other instruments of national power, and across domains, theatres, and the spectrum of conflict, and in concert with our allies.
- **Campaigning:** Competition and conflict with China and Russia are not limited to wartime. Their coercive efforts must be deterred and complicated, while our own capabilities must be developed along with our Allies and partners.
- **Building enduring advantages:** We must build a Future Force that can innovate and acquire more quickly and invest more wisely.

## SECAF’s Operational Imperatives

1. Space Order of Battle
2. ABMS / JADC2
3. Air, Sea, and Surface Moving Target Engagement at Scale
4. NGAD Family of Systems
5. Resilient Forward Basing
6. B-21 Long Range Strike Family of Systems
7. Readiness to Mobilize, Deploy, and Fight

## The 6 Fights We Must Win

- **The Fight to Compete/Deter:** Even in combat, Airmen will compete to nurture partnerships and strengthen alliances and deter horizontal and vertical escalation throughout the spectrum of conflict.
- **The Fight to Get into Theater:** Airmen should expect resistance and interference from the very beginning of any crisis. Airmen will execute Agile Combat Employment when getting into theater.
- **The Fight to Get Airborne:** No air base, even in our homeland, will be a sanctuary. Airmen will generate combat power, even in the face of enemy attempts to stop them.
- **The Fight for Air Superiority:** Tomorrow’s adversaries will contest our control of the air in an attempt to prevent us from delivering effective support. Therefore, Airmen must fight for air superiority to create windows of opportunity for teamwork in all warfighting domains.
- **The Fight to Deny Adversary Objectives:** To deliver devastating combat power against an aggressor, Airmen act as part of the Joint Force to fight to deny adversary objectives by stopping an attack or invasion.
- **The Fight to Sustain the Fight:** Airmen must be smarter, more agile, more responsive, and more flexible than our adversaries to survive and sustain the Joint Force.

## ANG Capstone Principles

*As an integral part of the Joint Force, the ANG:*

- Ensures national security through the Constitution's militia-based construct
- Strengthens national security through dispersion of at least one Department of the Air Force (DAF) unit-equipped operational core mission wing and flying squadron across each of the "54"
- Requires concurrent recapitalization and modernization ensuring a relevant, capable, and interoperable combat reserve
- Capitalizes on dual capabilities for federal and state missions
- Develops Total and Joint Force leaders

***“Over the past 20 years, our efforts consisted of small formations from fixed bases. But experience from Ukraine shows that we must be able to field and operate as large-scale formations.”***  
**CNGB**

## Defend, Deter, and Dominate – Go Guard!

### Defend

- Deterrence begins with Defense - the homeland is the #1 priority of the NDS, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC.
- The ANG provides 94% of homeland air defense and an increasing portion of multi-domain defense; ANG recapitalization is critical to the #1 NDS priority.

### Deter

- Deterrence requires a USAF that can hold any part of the globe at risk.
- The Air Force depends on the ANG for global reach; the ANG comprises 30% of Total Force combat power.
- The deterrent power of the Total Force requires concurrent recapitalization of all components; we must ensure the Active, Guard, and Reserve are equipped for competition with the NDS pacing challenge.

### Dominate

- The Air National Guard maintains the same readiness standards and response times as CONUS-based active component forces.
- The Air National Guard has the most skilled and experienced pilots, maintainers, and support personnel in the Total Force.
- The Air National Guard is Always Ready, Always There, and Always on Mission!

## Lines of Effort

### Recapitalization

#### ***Fighter Recapitalization***

- The AF is divesting legacy equipment and missions to shift resources to advanced capabilities tailored to meet the NDS pacing challenge.
- **The ANG is the answer to the Total Force recapitalization dilemma;** if fully leveraged, the ANG will enable the Total Force to maximize fight-tonight capability.
- The Total Force can recapitalize all 25 ANG fighter squadrons within existing fielded, programmed, and planned resources by allocating new aircraft to the ANG and reassigning backup aircraft inventory from the Active Component to the ANG.
- The ANG has a plan to recapitalize two ANG squadrons per year with new or existing non-legacy fighters starting in FY24.
- This rate will enable the ANG to recapitalize the fighter fleet out of legacy A-10, F-15C and F-16 fighters within 10 years.
- The ANG is the component that will enable investment in the future and recapitalization of the fight-tonight force – if fully leveraged.

#### ***MAF Recapitalization***

- The Department's recapitalization of our aging legacy tankers is concerning. The AF is allocating the new KC-46 across the total force with 71% of new KC-46s based with Active units but only 17% assigned to Guard units, even though the Guard operates 38% of the total Air Force tanker fleet. This does not match the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force intent.

## ANG Strategic Outcomes

- Advance ANG-centric solutions that optimize USAF design, development, and employment.
- Maximize concurrent recapitalization and interoperable modernization of equipment to actualize the National Defense Strategy.
- Foster enduring relationships with the USAF, allies, international and internal partners.
- Develop Total and Joint Force leaders.
- Reform bureaucracy to enable responsive access to manpower, equipment, and decision making.
- Expand ANG missions as the USAF's Information Warfare (IW) concept solidifies, particularly cyber-related missions.
- Increase ANG participation in the nuclear enterprise.
- Support space operations to secure space dominance.

- The Air Force is asking the ANG to divest legacy force structure without either re-capitalizing and/or re-missioning. The ANG requires a plan for those units and missions identified for elimination in a timely manner so as not to impact service members, their families, employers, and their communities.

## Innovate

- **The engine of innovative spirit lies with our Airmen...Leaders need to empower this cultural shift!**
- Do not wait for the bureaucracy; leaders at every level need to cultivate a culture of flexibility and empower their Airmen to **proceed until apprehended**.
- Do not wait for higher headquarters to tell you how to ready the force. We must unleash the innovative power of our Airmen to design, plan, build, and lead readiness gaining drills/AT/exercises.
- We can't wait for the Future Force to be bought and delivered. We must act now; we need to innovate. The gap between what we have and what we must have for the future fight is closed by the innovative capacity of Airmen.
- We are continuously consolidating or closing our permanent overseas operating locations. Our bases in the Indo-Pacific are targeted and no longer provide sanctuary. The Air Force's answer to this problem in the near term is **AGILE COMBAT EMPLOYMENT (ACE)**.
- ACE "complicates the enemy's targeting process, creates political and operational dilemmas for the enemy, and creates flexibility for friendly forces."
- The challenge of ACE is to conduct operations at a speed, scope, complexity, and scale far beyond recent experience. As **MULTI-CAPABLE AIRMEN**, our ANG members will conduct duties across multiple AFSCs to minimize our footprint and create dilemmas for our adversaries.

## Engage

- One of the unique qualities of the National Guard is our local & state community, state government, national, and international relationships.
- The ANG at all levels needs to engage its partners to help carry the message; we are the fight-tonight force and the nation's first military responders.
- We must continue to engage to help the Air Force, the Joint Force, and Congress understand the true value of the ANG: Community ties to America, National Guard Family, Multi-status Airmen, Deep Experience in mission, Authorities, SPP, NAREA, Low-cost producer of Air Power.
- A unique and invaluable way the National Guard engages with Allies and Partners (A&P) is through the State Partnership Program (SPP).
  - Through SPP, a state partners with a foreign nation and conducts military-to-military engagements, providing critical support to the whole-of-nation approach called for by the NDS; Authorized for MIL-CIV & CIV-CIV.
  - SPP has successfully built A&P relations for over 30 years.
  - 100 nations around the globe participate in SPP.
  - SPP includes 88 partnerships and continues to grow.
- One of the major misconceptions requiring us to consistently engage with others, especially other military members at all ranks, is the misunderstanding that the Guard is difficult to access. In actuality:
  - ANG units can and have responded in less than 24 hours for both CONUS and OCONUS missions.
  - Three basic elements are needed to access the ANG:
    - A valid requirement for forces – same as active component.
    - A statutory authority – same as active component.
    - The resources to fund orders for duty.
  - The next fight will require every service and component to be "all in."

## Quarterly Focus: GPC & TFO

### Key Takeaways:

TFO is about how to organize, train, and equip the Total Force to cost-effectively deter or defeat China.

TFO is also how USAF best uses the strengths of its active and reserve components to create the most dominant force.

TFO expands on Total Force Integration initiatives of the past that proved the combat capability of the Guard, and its ability to maintain the same readiness.

As the USAF changes from rotational support to long-term global deterrence, it can leverage the ANG's unique part-time model to efficiently expand USAF's capacity and capability to win in GPC.

The Guard remains accessible under existing authorities to include 10 USC 12304 and 12304b. Combatant commanders can secure funding under these authorities to access the ANG.

Post-optimization, active and reserve component units remain available under the AFFORGEN model.

### The Challenge of Great Power Conflict

- The USAF is currently designed to provide rotational support for the CENTCOM-focused war on terrorism. Senior Air Force leadership has acknowledged that in our current form, we are not optimized for Great Power Conflict (GPC) with the People's Republic of China or Russia as directed by the National Defense Strategy.
- To succeed at GPC, the USAF must transition from counter insurgency operations to strategic deterrence, including the ability to present a credible force for an indefinite period in a peacetime environment.
- Deterrence is about demonstrating the ability to fight and win today, decades from now, or anytime in between. To meet this demand, the USAF must field a dominant, state-of-the-art fighter force, while also investing in the next generation force and technologies.
- Building a potent force today while investing in the future is an expensive proposition, forcing leaders to make difficult decisions between two, inherently favoring one at the expense of the other.
- Without more funding, USAF leaders must come up with creative solutions that make the force more efficient and effective to minimize tradeoffs between short and long-term requirements.
- Organizational changes like Total Force Optimization leverage the innovative operating model of the ANG and yield these benefits by optimizing the active and reserve components for GPC.

### What is Total Force Optimization

- Total Force Optimization is a new approach to USAF force structure that allocates mission demands between our active and reserve components based on their relative advantages. The result is a force that is greater than the sum of its parts.
- The transition from war on terror rotational deployments to peacetime strategic campaigning changes mission sets and execution rates.
- To take advantage of the unique strengths of the active and reserve components, the USAF must re-balance missions between them, allowing for a more flexible, responsive, economical, and dynamic overall force.
- For example, the ANG attributes of interconnectedness, distribution, economy, dynamic use, and experience allow the reserve component to maintain the same training and readiness as the active component at a fraction of the cost.
- Fundamentally, TFO allows the USAF to reassess how missions are assigned across components to execute them more efficiently and effectively. In turn, an optimized USAF helps the United States continue its transformation into a superior Great Power Competitor.

***“Total Force Optimization is how the Air Force leverages the Air National Guard value proposition.”***  
**DANG**