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AIR POWER CONFERENCE 2012

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

DCAF

10 MAY 2012

Welcome & salutations

- Service Chiefs, VIPs and representatives
 - Guest speakers
 - Distinguished guests
 - Ladies and Gentlemen
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- Welcome to the 2012 Royal Australian Air Force Air Power conference.
 - I would like up front to acknowledge the very generous and faithful support of our sponsors for this conference.
 - Our principal sponsor this year, as it has been for the previous three years, is BOEING.
They have not only generously supported our conference over these years but they continue to be a major partner with Air Force in developing, supplying and supporting the RAAF and Australian air power.
 - We are also very strongly supported by our major sponsors, Rolls-Royce and L3, both of whom are steadfast partners with Air Force in a number of capability systems.
 - Finally, I would like to thank Defence Health for their ongoing support of our men and women in uniform and especially their support to our families.

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Background to Air Power Conferences

- The first CAF Air Power Conference was held in Canberra in March 1991 on the topic *Smaller but Larger: Conventional Air Power into the 21st Century*.
- That conference explored a number of themes that were of importance and concern at the time.
- As the then Chief, AIRMSHL Ray Funnell noted, the conference was not only a means of celebrating the RAAF's 70th birthday, but was a response to the obligation of “professional airmen to question, examine and restate our fundamental beliefs.”
- At a time when air power, “particularly in this country” was seen as “frequently undervalued and frequently misunderstood” the conference explored the utility of air power in the evolving international security environment.
- Today the utility of air power, although perhaps more evident, is still open to some persistent undervaluation and misunderstanding.
- The need for conferences like this then, to “question, examine and restate our fundamental beliefs” is as relevant and necessary today as it was over two decades ago.
- The RAAF's Air Power Conferences have grown since 1991 into regionally and internationally respected forums that have engaged a number of important and relevant air power themes.
- Our conferences have attracted, and continue to attract, a diverse audience from a very broad set of backgrounds.
- In attendance this year are service chiefs, or their senior representatives, from:
 - Brunei, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand,

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Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

- We are proud to have attracted such a strong international guest list; one which represents the region, our partners, allies and friends.
- We also welcome senior Defence officials, policy-makers, strategists, academics and scholars from local and international organisations, institutions and governments.
- Welcome too are members of military services from the region and around the world, and uniformed and civilian members of our own services, members of the public, commentators and our very good friends in the media.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, we have over 650 attendees this year.

Purpose of these Conferences

- There are a number of reasons the RAAF chooses to host these conferences, and to date, the value gained from them has continued to represent a very sound investment.
- The primary justification for these conferences is that they represent invaluable opportunities in terms of:
 - engagement,
 - Cooperation,
 - education and
 - the impetus to further air power development.
- Many of the themes, presentations and indeed questions from this conference will result in expanded engagement and stronger relationships.

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What is this Conference about?

- Our conference this year has adopted a theme that we are sure will be as informative and interesting as it is contemporary and important.
- It is a theme chosen by AIRMSHL Brown in response to the immense interest generated within our Air Force following the events of last year.
- Our focus as described in our conference material is: *Air Power and Coercive Diplomacy* and our speakers are asked to examine the use of air power over Libya in 2011.
- The intent of the program is primarily twofold:
 - First, to provide a perspective on the contemporary international security environment through an analysis of the events in the Middle East associated with the 'Arab Spring'; and
 - second; to investigate the use of air power in Libya within the general coercive strategy employed by NATO.

The Presentations

- We are extremely fortunate this year to have a number of leading experts in their relevant fields address a series of issues around our Air Power focus.
- In addition, we are very grateful to the senior military officers who have made themselves available to present their national perspectives on the operations undertaken as part of Operation *Unified Protector*.
- I think you will find the program will indeed challenge some of our generally held views and some of our prejudices regarding the use of air power as a coercive instrument.

- I also suggest that in examining the conflict in Libya we might have reason to contemplate a little more deeply the nature and state of the contemporary security environment and our part in it.

Closing

- Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Canberra - our nation's capital.
- Without any further preamble and to commence our 2012 Air Power Conference, please sit fast as I invite our first speaker The Hon Stephen Smith, Minister for Defence to deliver the key note address.
- Minister.