

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2006 AIR FORCE READINESS

**STATEMENT OF: GENERAL T. MICHAEL MOSELEY
 VICE CHIEF OF STAFF
 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

3 MARCH 2005

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, Representative Ortiz, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the state of your Air Force's readiness. Today, the Air Force has over 30,000 Airmen assigned or deployed in 122 countries fighting and saving lives. We are currently able to meet the demands of each of the Combatant Commanders. Like our sister services, our primary focus is on securing a peaceful Iraq and meeting Central Command's requirements.

While the Air Force is focused on today's operations, we must rebuild our forces for tomorrow's fight.

CURRENT OPERATIONS

The Air Force continues joint operations against Taliban remnants and Iraqi insurgents. At the close of 2004, we maintained nearly 31,000 Airmen in the region, including 5,000 Air National Guardsmen and 2,500 Air Force Reservists, flying 225 sorties a day over Iraq and Afghanistan. Having already flown more than 300,000 sorties, the Total Force team of Active, Guard, and Reserve Airmen continues to perform close air support, special forces operations, aerial refueling, intertheater and intratheater airlift, search and rescue, aeromedical evacuation, and persistent C4ISR from air and space.

While certainly prominent in Major Combat Operations, rapid strike has continued to enhance joint warfighting during reconstruction and stability operations. Strikes against Taliban forces and Iraqi insurgents show the enduring need for strike capabilities and the capability of the Air Force to strike high value targets, joint critical targets, and time-sensitive targets with minimal

collateral damage. The Air Force is bolstering this immediate strike capability with the deployment of 500-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions now in theater, further reducing the potential of needless collateral damage.

By combining the payload, long-loiter, and high-altitude capacity of bombers with precision munitions, improved command and control, and precise targeting, we have expanded our ability to conduct CAS. Performing CAS at high altitude with great precision and persistence is a major combat advancement in joint operations with land forces and special operations teams. Using laser and Global Positioning System-guided bombs such as the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), and with direct communications with a ground controller, a variety of aircraft are able to drop large numbers of JDAMs very close to friendly troops, destroying the enemy with massive, yet tailored, firepower. This capability provides day/night and all-weather support to ground forces.

Not only are Airmen directly overhead in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they are also serving on the ground. Due to the continuing high operations tempo, the Air Force is filling over 2,500 positions in 16 different combat support skills for the U.S. Army in deployed locations – one of those skills is combat convoy operations. And, Airmen in Nevada are controlling remotely piloted aircraft flying over Iraq; aircraft critical to persistent C4ISR and rapid strike missions.

The Air Force has taken steps to reduce the threat to our ground troops in Iraq. To help defeat IEDs, the Air Force has fielded Specialized Explosive Detection Dogs and upgraded three flying platforms that specifically focus on detecting and defeating IEDs. The Air Force is also using airlifters like the C-130

and C-17 to reduce the number of trucks in convoys by nearly 350 trucks per day.

Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan highlight the importance of our aging space-based C4ISR capabilities to U.S. and coalition forces. These capabilities have become integral to effective warfighting operations and include precision position, navigation and timing; secure communications; global weather; launch and support operations; persistent worldwide missile warning; and intelligence gathering.

The Air Force's principal Homeland Defense mission is Air Defense and preserving the air sovereignty of the United States and its territories. Since 9/11, in response to Operation NOBLE EAGLE, the Air Force has flown over 37,000 fighter, aerial refueling, and airborne early warning sorties in defense of the United States; and there is more than surveillance involved as over 1,800 air patrols have responded to actual incidents and suspicious flight operations.

In the Balkans, Airmen have flown over 27,000 sorties in support of Operations JOINT FORGE and JOINT GUARDIAN.

Since December 1989 and throughout 2004, Airmen have been a critical part of the interagency fight against illegal drug and narcotics trafficking. Deployed along the southern United States, in the Caribbean, and Central and South America, eight aerostats and five ground-based radars provide round-the-clock detection and monitoring of airspace.

Additionally, the Air Force is heavily involved in providing humanitarian relief to people in need around the globe. Most recently the Air Force deployed

aircraft and Airmen to assist joint and coalition relief efforts for the Southeast Asian countries struck by tsunamis. In the initial days, C-130s and KC-135s delivered over 120 tons of food, water, medical supplies, vehicles, and personnel to assess relief assistance. In another region of the world, the Air Force provided airlift and logistical support to the deployment of African Union peacekeepers to the war torn area of Darfur in Sudan.

Supporting all of these Air Force operations is a robust composite force training program that allows our Airmen to train like they fight. Competition for scarce air, land, and water resources threatens to further encroach onto our installations, ranges, and airspace – vital national assets for developing and testing new weapons, training forces, and conducting joint exercises. The Air Force supports legislative, regulatory, and management initiatives that protect Air Force operational capability while sustaining, restoring, and modernizing our natural infrastructure.

Air and Space Systems Readiness

The number one challenge for the Air Force is the need to modernize and recapitalize our aging systems. We are operating the oldest fleet in the history of the United States Air Force. Our aircraft fleet now averages 23 years old. To determine the viability of these aging fleets, we chartered the Air Force Fleet Viability Board (AF FVB) in 2004 to establish a continuous, repeatable process for conducting fleet assessments. The AF FVB completed its first assessment, of the C-5A, in July 2004, and is currently studying the 43-year-old KC-135 fleet.

We have an office dedicated to analyzing our fleet called the Aging Aircraft System Program Office, under our Air Force Material Command.

Almost every single platform in the Air Force is aging, and it has become difficult for some of these platforms to fully perform their missions. Our aging communications satellites are challenged in keeping up with today's information bandwidth requirements. At the height of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 80% of all satellite communications in and out of the theater used commercial satellites, because our current military constellation satellites did not have the necessary capacity.

Our air breathing platforms are in the same state as our space fleet. Some of our helicopter pilots are flying the same helicopters their fathers flew in Vietnam. Our tanker fleet is over 40 years old. The pilots who will fly the Air Force's last KC-135 tanker have not even been born yet. Our average fighter is 23 years old, and they have been used in a combat environment continuously since DESERT STORM. We are operating some of these aircraft with a growing list of operational restrictions to avoid structural failures. Whether it operates 1 foot off the ground or all the way into space, we have a fleet that continues to get older every day.

With the right programs and effort, recapitalization allows the Air Force to do more and operate with less money. The C-17 production program continues to be a success story for the joint warfighting community. We are on schedule to receive the 180th of these force multipliers in 2008. In concert with C-5 modernization programs, C-17 acquisition is the critical enabler for meeting

established airlift requirements in support of the current force-planning construct. The C-17 has been the airlifter of choice in contingency operations. During Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, C-17s airdropped over two million humanitarian rations, which was the largest humanitarian airdrop in the history of combat aviation. If the Air Force is to continue to meet the needs of the warfighter, and stay within our budget, then we must recapitalize or modernize the rest of our fleet.

Personnel Readiness

We are on track to bring active duty end strength to the congressionally authorized level of 359,700 by the end of fiscal year 2005. The Active Duty and Air Reserve Component are on course to meet their FY05 recruiting goals.

Our civilian workforce will go through a significant transformation with implementation of the Department of Defense National Security Personnel System (NSPS). This modern, agile human resource system will be responsive to the national security environment, while preserving employee protections and benefits, as well as the core values of the civil service. Implementation will begin as early as July 2005.

Infrastructure Readiness

Our Depot Maintenance Strategy and Master Plan calls for major transformation in financial and infrastructure capitalization. To support this plan, the Air Force increased funding in fiscal years 2004-2009 for depot facilities and equipment modernization.

Over the next two years, we will renovate or replace nearly 36,000 homes through privatization, and an additional 11,000 homes through military construction. All substandard dorms will be replaced by 2009. Similarly, we've implemented a plan to ensure all fitness centers meet current Air Force standards by 2011. Finally, we've continued our focus on providing quality childcare facilities.

CONCLUSION

The Air Force offers an unparalleled set of combat capabilities to directly influence any joint or interagency operation, as well as the enabling capabilities to improve joint warfighting capabilities on the ground, on or under the sea, and in the air and space. The Air Force's ability to fight as a joint and coalition team has evolved from deconfliction, to integration, and now we see a growing sense of interdependence across the board.

The Air Force can meet the needs of today's joint forces. With your help the Air Force will be able to meet the needs of tomorrow's forces.