

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS**  
**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SUBJECT: “Adequacy of FY 08 DoD Authorization Budget Request to Meet  
Military Readiness Needs”**

**STATEMENT OF: GENERAL JOHN D. W. CORLEY**  
**VICE CHIEF OF STAFF**  
**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

## **I. Introduction**

Your Air Force is engaged around the world, fighting terrorism and insurgents in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and fulfilling our roles as Airmen in the interdependent fight for the joint team. Simultaneously, we stand prepared for rapid response and conflict across the globe as our nation's sword and shield. We fly, fight and dominate in three war fighting domains – air, space and cyberspace – giving our nation sovereign options to employ military force no other nation has ever had.

We are also preparing for an uncertain future doing all we can to become even more efficient and effective. Due to increased operations, maintenance, and personnel costs, we have been forced to self-finance the centerpiece of future dominance – a massive and vital re-capitalization and modernization effort for our aging air and space force. Despite our best efforts, we face declining readiness and soaring re-capitalization rates: the time between when an aircraft is first flown and when it is replaced is now up to 50 years. While our aircraft and spacecraft get older, our enemies do not sit idly by; instead, adversaries – both declared and potential – are developing and fielding new and better means to threaten our nation, our interests and our way of life. Our current force is at risk of obsolescence vis-à-vis these emerging threats.

Though we are currently supporting global Combatant Commander (COCOM) requirements and GWOT taskings, *we are being forced to assume risk in force structure, infrastructure and readiness for the future.*

To ensure success, your Air Force is organizing, training and equipping our Airmen for both the current and future fights, building in the flexibility to operate across the entire spectrum of conflict and deliver effects at all levels of war. Your Air Force remains focused on its mission of providing asymmetric range and payload that is part of an interdependent joint team.

It is no coincidence that America's Air Force has unprecedented Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. We learned our lessons from our own history and others', and we invested vast resources and effort to establish and maintain dominance in our three warfighting domains: air, space and cyberspace. We upgraded, modernized, and completely changed our training mindset and programs. The result was a flexible, responsive, and lethal force that spearheaded the joint victories in DESERT STORM, Operation ALLIED FORCE, Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF/OEF). But our future dominance could be at risk.

Let's examine Air Force "readiness" with respect to each of our three main priorities: war fighting, from today's GWOT to tomorrow's wars; developing and caring for Airmen and their families; and re-capitalization and modernization of our aging air and space inventories.

## **II. War Fighting**

### **Today**

Our first priority is to help the U.S. win the long war against terrorism and to ensure we're prepared for the next war. Air Force GWOT missions are only the latest in a string of 16+ consecutive years of combat in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), beginning with our initial Operation DESERT SHIELD deployments in August 1990

through ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa (HOA) today. Your USAF flies approximately 300 airlift;<sup>1</sup> aeromedical evacuation; air-refueling; Command and Control and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C2ISR); strike; and electronic warfare sorties daily as part of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF/OEF).

Of the approximately 25,000 Airmen deployed in the CENTCOM AOR, approximately 5,000 are considered “in lieu of” (ILO) taskings – meaning we are filling other Services' billets in some of their stressed skill areas.<sup>2</sup> Since 2004 we have deployed approximately 16,000 Airmen in support of such ILO tasks, and we expect an increase in that total.<sup>3</sup>

But our engagement in CENTCOM is only the “tip of the iceberg.” In addition to the 25,000 Airmen deployed to CENTCOM’s AOR at any one time, we also have approximately 213,000 Airmen (183,000 Active Duty plus an additional 30,000 Guard and Reserve) fulfilling other daily COCOM tasks.<sup>4</sup> That equates to about 40% of our Total Force and about 53% of the Active Duty force.<sup>5</sup>

## Global Vigilance

Through technological advances and the ingenuity of our Airmen we can now surveil, and if necessary, deliver kinetic or non-kinetic effects to any target anywhere on the face of the Earth day or night, in any weather. Because ISR capabilities are at the core of finding, fixing and engaging targets, ISR has never been more important during our 60 years as an independent Service. In fact, ISR has become the foundation of Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power. Yet ISR assets and Airmen are often “low density” compared to their high demand. We are wearing them out at rates that must be reversed.

We boast the world’s preeminent space force today.<sup>6</sup> Yet all the satellites continue to age; every day on-orbit is a day closer to the end of their mission. And, for the first time ever, our satellites are operating in a contested environment as demonstrated by the recent destruction

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<sup>1</sup> In Iraq alone, USAF airlift delivers approximately 3,500 trucks’ worth of cargo in an average month, providing the Army and Marines the flexibility to re-mission those vehicles and associated support troops to alternate missions.

<sup>2</sup> Examples include detainee operations, convoy operations and protection, explosive ordnance disposal, civil engineering, security, interrogators, communications, fuels, medical, logistics, intelligence, and base operating support (BOS).

<sup>3</sup> The Air Force ILO footprint has grown from about 1900 in 2004 to 5000 in 2007, and is projected to reach approximately 6000 ILOs in 2008. (AFPC/A1P) On top of ILO tasks, the Air Force also supports another 1,200 Individual Augmentee (IA) joint manned positions.

<sup>4</sup> Other COCOM tasks include such missions as space control and situational awareness, counter-drug, homeland defense, nuclear deterrence, and national C<sup>4</sup>ISR.

<sup>5</sup> As of March 2007, the Air Force comprises approximately 345,024 Active Duty, 105,877 Guard and 73,108 Reserve, or 524,009 Total Force uniformed Airmen. We also have 166,004 civilian Airmen.

<sup>6</sup> The Air Force space force includes nearly 10,000 credentialed space professionals (vs. the Army’s 198 [FA40], Navy’s 51, and Marines’ 110) operating 75 satellites with an additional 59 satellites operated jointly with other agencies. Our space professionals conduct 450+ satellite ops / day while operating a worldwide space command and control network that contributed to the "rescue" of approximately ~\$11 billion in satellites in 2005. Our space professionals also operate a worldwide space surveillance network, tracking satellites from 55 countries. Through our sovereign capabilities, we know there are over 560 daily flights over Baghdad by satellites of all nations. And our space professionals operate a worldwide missile warning network.

of an in-orbit satellite by China, proving that space is not a sanctuary. Perhaps most dauntingly, satellite development, acquisition and launch timelines now run about 10 years. That means our nation must act now to modernize and re-capitalize its space force if we want to maintain our position as both an economic and military force in a world ten years from now. The readiness of our space force impacts our way of life and national security today. Who can imagine a world today without GPS navigation and timing signals, instantaneous communications and accurate weather? To help ensure the asymmetric information advantage the Air Force provides the joint team we have increased communications readiness funding by \$300 million. This increase will help the Air Force continue to expand our dominance into the cyberspace domain, a domain which underpins how we fight today. Over the next decade our dependence on space and cyberspace is bound to grow and our ability to dominate these domains for the joint team will be further challenged.

## **Global Reach**

America's Global Reach relies on Air Force tankers, airlift, and spacelift.<sup>7</sup> Like our space and cyber forces, tankers and lift are single points of failure. Without them we will not be able to deliver on our commitments to the nation and the joint force. Like our ISR forces, Global Reach assets and Airmen have relatively low density compared to the incredible demand for them. Since 11 Sep 01, Air Force cargo planes have flown 884,223 mobility sorties, moved more than 7,670,000 passengers and transported 2,940,000 tons of cargo. These sorties feed and fuel the joint force by providing vital supplies for the joint force. One of our Air Mobility Command aircraft departs an airfield somewhere on the globe every 90 seconds, every day, 365 days a year. The force multiplier which underpins our Global reach is our tanker fleet. Yet our tanker aircraft are the oldest in our inventory and showing severe signs of fatigue and stress. Some of our venerable KC-135s turned 50 years old in 2006, and the average KC-135 is over 46, often older than the aircrews flying them. The cost to operate and maintain these older airframes is growing rapidly. But it is not just a dollar figure we are concerned about, it is the lives of our Airmen who are doing everything they can to execute the mission day in and day out. We are in uncharted territory and that makes us nervous, we have aircraft operating under weight and speed restrictions further emphasizing the need to divest and recapitalize our fleet.

Depot maintenance is a key component to maintaining an older fleet, such as the KC-135s. Although we are increasing funding by \$400 million from last year we are losing ground. Despite the increase, only 74% of the requirement is funded in FY 08. Rising costs have forced the Air Force to accept risk in this area as we attempt to be good stewards of the money entrusted to us and prepare for today's fight as well recapitalize for future threats.

## **Global Power**

Ultimately, range and payload are the soul of an air force, and at its core are flying and fighting. Each day the U.S. Air Force flies approximately 2700 sorties around the planet involving tens of thousands of Airmen, including nearly a hundred strike, special operations, and combat search and rescue sorties. Each day thousands of Airmen not flying actual combat fly thousands of training sorties to prepare them for their Global Power roles. Each day Airmen monitor and guard 500 on-call ICBMs across a combined landmass the size of the state of Pennsylvania, providing a nuclear backstop for the nation and deterring and dissuading potential

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<sup>7</sup> Our space lift rockets and Airmen have successfully launched the last 49 national security payloads in a row, and we have had 100% success with our EELV class of vehicles.

enemies from using weapons of mass destruction. And each day Airmen deliver expeditionary, reversible counterspace effects, helping provide freedom of movement for deployed forces.

But each day the readiness of both our Airmen and our equipment is eroding. The number of our units reporting “green,” or fully mission capable, has declined from 68% in 2004 to 56% today. That trend has thus far been slowed mainly by our amazing, dedicated Airmen and adaptable capabilities. Spare parts have increased in cost 6% this year and the older aircraft we are flying are consuming more of them. Despite possessing 1,200 fewer aircraft the Air Force is flying the same number of hours as we did 13 years ago. The added wear and tear is fueling the increased demand for spare parts, creating a vicious cycle, providing a further mandate to recapitalize the force. Our Airmen must have the tools and parts to accomplish the mission.

As the DoD’s largest consumer of aviation fuel, the cost per barrel of oil has an enormous impact on the Air Force’s budget. Every \$10 increase in the price of a refined barrel of fuel costs the Air Force \$600 million annually, which translates in to reduced flying hours and ultimately, readiness. Our average cost per flying hour of our legacy fleet is increasing by 10%. To help balance this trend we are programming a 10% reduction in flying hours in FY08, anticipating being able to take advantage of high fidelity simulators to make up that difference. We are accepting risk in this area; though simulators are a phenomenal tool there is *no* substitute to flying and fixing aircraft.

## **Infrastructure**

While we are forced to take risk in infrastructure to invest in necessary modernization, our funding is focused on the critical infrastructure requirements needed to support the Air Force’s priorities of winning the GWOT, caring for Airmen and their families, and re-capitalizing the force.

## **Tomorrow**

While the GWOT is the appropriate priority for the near-term, the nation must be prepared for emerging global threats at all levels. We must continue to be able to detect, deter and dissuade other potential enemies – both state and non-state actors – and fight battles and react to contingencies across the spectrum of conflict. Our nation deserves no less. The future security environment will be different from today’s operating environment and the full range of military capabilities will be needed to maintain relevance and advantage. Failure to anticipate is catastrophic in its impact on strategy and operations precisely because it leads to the psychological dislocation of surprise. We cannot fail to anticipate increasingly lethal enemies or how they’ll conduct war in the future.

The last time an American Soldier was attacked by enemy aircraft was 1953. The ability to look up in the sky and know there’s nothing to fear is priceless. Yet, air superiority – the precondition of effective operations on land, at sea, as well as in the air – is not an entitlement; it is a battle that must be fought and won, often at high cost.

Today, America depends on air power to an unprecedented extent. The Air Force contributes to a national strategy of reassuring allies, while deterring, dissuading and decisively defeating enemies. Your Air Force gives others strategic pause and our Nation political leverage

by our presence. Its re-capitalization is an *urgent national security need*, not a discretionary luxury.

Our men and women in uniform trust each other with their lives. They count on each member of the Joint Team to deliver the full range of Service-unique effects. Only the Air Force can provide global surveillance, global command and control, and the requisite range, precision and payload to strike any target, anywhere, anytime, at the speed of sound or the speed of light.

Despite any future reduction in the “footprint” in Iraq and Afghanistan, we expect that air, space, and cyber power will remain heavily engaged. Even after 16+ years of combat in the region we see little likelihood of reduced Air Force operations tempo (OPSTEMPO). The U.S. has vital interests in the Middle East and the Air Force must be able to promote and defend those interests. If, as we expect, we are still engaged in CENTCOM in 2016 the Air Force will have been engaged in non-stop combat for a quarter century.

Without an accelerated plan for re-capitalization, the elevated OPSTEMPO – which has become a *de facto* “steady state” – will continue to challenge the readiness and availability of Air Force assets to support our overall defense strategy. Such overstretch is an invitation to existing and would-be competitors to destabilize and threaten U.S interests in regions around the world. We are already seeing advanced military capabilities propagate around the globe. Double-digit SAMs are proliferating and remain the primary threat to air dominance in the future. Current and projected air defenses will be capable of crippling a legacy air force. Adversary air-to-air fighters will be comparable or superior to U.S. legacy aircraft. By 2010, numerous nations will also possess low-observable land attack cruise missiles increasing the anti-access threat in range and lethality. Adversaries around the globe are pursuing new camouflage, concealment and deception technologies and new armament like directed energy weapons that present us further challenges. Bringing the entire Air Force to the next generation of capability is crucial to defeating these threats and sustaining America’s asymmetric joint warfighting advantages.

The Strategic Planning Guidance (SPG) recognizes this emerging threat environment, and provides guidance on capabilities needed from the Nation’s Air Force. Specifically, the 2006 SPG directs the Air Force to rebalance toward unmanned systems, stealth, penetration, persistent long-range strike, and other systems to sustain operations in denied areas against adversaries equipped with advanced military capabilities.

Charged with accomplishing these strategic ends and given the means set in the QDR, the Air Force is taking its lead from the 2006 Force Planning Construct that identifies the scale and scope of requirements for us to defend our nation, its ideals and interests. For the foreseeable future, steady-state operations, including operations as part of the long war against terrorist networks, and associated rotation base and sustainment requirements, will be the main determinant for sizing U.S. forces. The Air Force must be sized to accommodate steady state and surge operations in homeland defense, GWOT, Irregular Warfare, and Conventional Campaigns.

For homeland defense, the Air Force must be capable of providing the Nation and the COCOMs with capabilities to detect, deter, and, if necessary, defeat threats to the U.S.

homeland, and enable partners to contribute to U.S. national security. Examples of capabilities provided or operations conducted by the Air Force for homeland defense include, but aren't limited to: strategic deterrence, North American air defense and air sovereignty operations, consequence management, and other defensive operations in air, space and cyberspace.

For the war on terror, the Air Force must provide the COCOMs with capabilities to conduct large-scale, potentially long duration irregular warfare campaigns including counterinsurgency, security, stability, transition and reconstruction operations. The Air Force must also remain capable of "surging" in irregular warfare to meet the demands of future operations similar to those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To conduct and win conventional campaigns, the Air Force must provide the COCOMs with capabilities to wage two nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns (or one conventional campaign if already engaged in a large-scale, long-duration irregular campaign), while selectively reinforcing deterrence against opportunistic acts of aggression. In one of the two campaigns the Air Force must be prepared to remove a hostile regime, destroy its military capacity and set conditions for the transition to, or for the restoration of, civil society. This is the strategic guidance we've been given.

To meet these steady-state and surge demands, the Air Force must re-capitalize to 86 modern, ready combat wing equivalents. Only with a force of this size and capability will the Air Force – through a single Combined Forces Air Component Commander per AOR – be able to provide the full range of air, space, and cyberspace capabilities to the COCOMs.

### **III. Airmen**

A continuing priority is developing and caring for our Airmen and their families. Airmen are our most precious resource and enable the Air Force to be the instrument of national power it is today. With Program Budget Decision (PBD) 720, the Air Force planned to reduce by 40,000 Active Duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) in order to submit a balanced budget and self-finance the critical re-capitalization and modernization of our aircraft, missile and space inventories. Because our Airmen are so important, this self-financing decision was difficult, but our only viable re-capitalization option in the tight budgetary climate. With increased fuels and maintenance costs reducing our buying power, we saw reducing our own end strength by 40,000 full-time equivalents over a 3-year period as an alternative to generate the needed investment capital. But we are not just reducing numbers to generate investment money. We are moving and retraining Airmen to have the proper skill set to shape the Air Force into the proper force structure.

Our force drawdown efforts have placed us on a glide slope to meet our PBD 720 end strength targets of 334,000 in FY07 and 328,400 in FY08. But personnel changes of this magnitude come with a degree of uncertainty and difficulty for our Airmen and their families. We are using voluntary measures to shape the force with the right skill sets, increase manning in stressed career fields, leverage new technologies, and lean our internal processes to reduce workload and reduce or eliminate unnecessary work through Air Force Smart Operations 21, or AFSSO21. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure the Air Force maintains the right size and mix of forces to meet the global challenges of today and tomorrow.

Since 2001 the AF has reduced its end-strength by 7% but our deployments have increased by 30% – primarily in support of the GWOT. The Air Force understands the Nation is at war and we are helping relieve stress on the Army and Marine Corps. Our brave Airmen are filling ILO taskings and performing roles or missions outside their normal Air Force core competencies. To be able to accomplish their ILO missions, many of our Airmen require additional training. Such extra training means more time away from families and from units already stretched thin by the OPSTEMPO. These ILO tasks add significant levels of stress on the deployed Airmen as well as the rest of our force. Because ILO-tasked units and Airmen are no longer available for core Air Force or home-station missions, and because our core missions must still be accomplished, the workload shifts to other Airmen at home and abroad.

Additionally, faced with a reduced inventory of support personnel, commanders are assessing how they can operate base support functions more efficiently given fewer resources. Inevitably, commanders may be required to consolidate capabilities on some bases to maintain services to our people. We must face these tough decisions today, so that tomorrow's Air Force will be better than today's. The mission must come first, but it's critical we take care of our Airmen and their families so they can better focus on the mission.

The bottom line is that the combination of self-financed manpower reductions, increased GWOT OPSTEMPO, and additional non-core ILO taskings are stressing our Airmen. Our unit-level leadership (officers and non-commissioned officers) continue to mitigate the risk, utilizing all the resources and programs available.

#### **IV. Re-Capitalizing & Modernizing**

The QDR-identified requirement for the Air Force to build a force organized around 86 modern combat wings is essential to meeting our national security strategy requirements. Our top five procurement priorities – the KC-X, CSAR-X, spaced-based early warning and communications satellites and equipment, F-35A, and next generation bomber – will help equip these wings.

Currently, the Air Force comprises 81 combat wings but we will divest three legacy fighter wings by FY2013 to free up the resources needed to help bridge some of the gap and reach 86 ready, modern combat wings by FY2025. The Air Force plans to increase to 23 wings of modernized air, space, and cyberspace assets capable of providing the nation the unblinking eye of Global Vigilance. The Air Force will remain relatively steady at 27 mobility wings, but modernize its Global Reach with KC-X, precision air-drop, and new intra- and inter-theater airlift capabilities. The Air Force plans to achieve a Global Power capability of 36 strike wings, including next generation bombers, fifth generation fighters, air operations centers, ballistic missiles, battlefield airmen, special operations, and modernized combat search and rescue assets. We owe the nation the ability to provide a full range of options, lethal and non-lethal, kinetic and non-kinetic, at the speed of sound or the speed of light, any time, anywhere the nation needs us to deliver effects across the spectrum of conflict.



As we evaluated the QDR-identified strategic environment we recognized the long-term need to expand both the capacity and capability of our force. Eighty-six fully-equipped and manned modern combat wings is the right force for defending our nation and preserving our interests over the long-term. To reach the objective of 86 modern combat wings, however, we need to ensure our investments are synchronized to maximize effect.

Currently, the Air Force's ability to meet its objective of 86 ready, modern combat wings is at risk. The procurement holiday of the 1990s is impacting our ability to meet the ends we have been assigned. In the 1990s, the Air Force assumed risk in modernization and sustained aging weapon systems throughout continual combat operations. The start of the Global War on Terror coincided with the period when the Air Force expected to recover and begin a force-wide re-capitalization. While victory in the war on terror is our number one priority, the nation cannot afford to take another procurement holiday that places our future at risk.

The Air Force has already begun to build toward 86 combat wings, but we need Congress' help to achieve the benchmark. In 2005, we began divesting aging aircraft either too costly to operate or approaching obsolescence. In 2006, we initiated a graduated decline in endstrength to match our declining force structure. As investments in research, development, and procurement increase, the Air Force will eventually begin to grow again – towards 86 combat wings – and our endstrength must eventually grow along with those additional combat wings. These two elements of our force must move in tandem to minimize wasted resources from a lack of synchronization between our platforms and people and we look forward to working with the Congress to ensure the synchronization of our programs.

Fiscal responsibility is a critical element of our plan. The Air Force is committed to planning and operating within our allocated resources, but we realize that commitment will not be enough to achieve what we need to do. The Air Force appreciates Congressional language in the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act supporting our efforts to retire our older aircraft. However, legislative restrictions on aircraft retirements remain an obstacle to efficient divestiture of our older, least capable, and costly to maintain platforms and equipment. These costs cascade into procurement delays for future platforms and divert resources away from expanding joint capabilities. We earnestly seek relief from Congress so we can execute a synchronized plan for aircraft retirement, replacement, and modernization. We realize executing a successful re-capitalization plan is a balancing act. We must continue to meet today's operational needs while ensuring that future Airmen fly and fight in an Air Force that is relevant, capable and sustainable.

## **V. Conclusion**

We have learned lessons from history. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past nor can we rest on the laurels of our current dominance. The United States of America depends on air, space and cyberspace power to an extent unprecedented in history. We are ready and engaged today, but our future is at risk. *Our nation must invest today to ensure tomorrow's air, space and cyberspace dominance.*