

# United States Air Force

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Testimony

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## ***Are We Ready? The President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Request and Global Challenges to Readiness***

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## 1. Introduction

The United States continues to confront a dynamic international environment requiring the military to remain strong and agile enough to face a diverse range of threats. Along with our Joint partners, the Air Force defends and advances the interests of the United States by providing unique capabilities across the full spectrum of operations required to succeed in today's fight and future conflicts. The Air Force remains a mission-focused and highly prepared force, a difficult task given over 20 years of constant combat operations.

## 2. Daily Ops and Readiness

Our enduring commitment to readiness and the Joint fight is evident in the missions being accomplished by nearly 37,000 American Airmen deployed to 135 locations across the globe. Last year the Air Force conducted more than 45,000 sorties supporting Operation IRAQI FREEDOM/NEW DAWN and almost 101,000 sorties supporting Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, delivered over 1.78 million passengers and 712,000 tons of cargo, and employed almost 2,580 short tons of munitions. Additionally, we have transported nearly 86,000 patients from the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), and our combat search and rescue forces met the "golden hour" goal of transporting seriously wounded warriors to treatment facilities within 60 minutes of injury nearly 98 percent of time. Our aeromedical evacuation sorties moved critically injured warriors to regional hospitals within hours of injury, contributing to the 98 percent battlefield injury survival rate. Lastly, we achieved a record 76 consecutive successful National Security Space launches since 1999. This high operations tempo challenges our ability to maintain readiness for the full spectrum of operations at an acceptable risk level.

### 3. Budget Overview

The Air Force strongly supports an appropriations bill, which would provide Congressional response to the strategic choices expressed by the President in the FY11 DoD budget. With current funding restricted to FY10 levels, the Air Force is working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to identify sources to fund urgent operational needs in Afghanistan and Iraq, military pay, operations and maintenance costs, and military healthcare. Resourcing these shortfalls may require making major reductions to flying hours, delaying or cancelling some weapons system sustainment and depot maintenance activity, and disrupting other day-to-day operations -- all of which will adversely affect readiness and impact our people serving in harm's way.

The Air Force's FY12 budget request for \$119.0B reflects an extraordinary effort to ensure America gets the maximum value out of every dollar. This request supports OSD's initiatives to reduce excess overhead costs and allocate the savings to force structure, modernization, and readiness. As the future security environment will require a range of agile and flexible capabilities, investments for today's conflict will also support our efforts to prepare, prevent, prevail, and preserve future capability. In FY12 the overall end strength remains relatively constant at 332,800 active duty Airmen reserve component end strength at 71,400 and Air National Guard end strength at 106,700.

Our FY12 \$45.3B operations and maintenance (O&M) budget request supports operations at 80 major installations and funds air, space, and cyber operations, as well as intelligence, logistics, nuclear deterrence, special operations, and search and rescue capabilities.

Efficiency efforts include consolidating four air operations centers into two, eliminating three Numbered Air Forces, reducing fuel and energy consumption, and improving depot and supply-chain business processes to sustain weapons systems. Realization of cost-savings allows the Air Force to reallocate funding to modernize and recapitalize weapons systems, improve capabilities and enhance warfighter operations. Examples include: investing in the Long-Range Strike Family of Systems, including a new penetrating bomber, maximizing production of the MQ-9 Reaper, increasing procurement of the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle, modernizing F-15 radars, and purchasing more Joint Strike Fighter simulators. The efficiency effort allowed the Air Force to improve readiness by re-focusing to overcome the challenges facing the nation, especially given the fiscal environment.

#### 4. Personnel Readiness

Our dedicated Airmen are the foundation of the Air Force. Recruiting, training, and retaining an all-volunteer force requires significant investment. This investment drives the effectiveness of our highly skilled and technically proficient force. Combatant commander requirements are being supported from both the continental U.S. and overseas bases. Of the 37,000 Airmen forward-deployed worldwide, nearly 30,000 are continuing on a rotating basis to contribute to operations in the CENTCOM AOR-- including 10,000 airmen in Afghanistan providing close air support to U.S. and coalition ground forces, airlift and air refueling, personnel rescue, air medical evacuation training to develop our partner air force, and many other missions.

An additional 57,000 total force Airmen are forward stationed overseas providing capabilities in direct support of our combatant commander requirements. And from home stations here in the United States, approximately 218,000 Airmen provide daily support to

combatant commanders' worldwide operations, including standing nuclear alert, commanding and controlling our satellites, controlling remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), analyzing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data and much more.

However, today's high operations tempo continues to stress 20 of the 132 enlisted specialties and eight of the 125 officer specialties. A number of programs are in place to bolster the manning in these career fields as well as mitigate potential negative effects on our Airmen and their families.

## 5. Space & Cyberspace Readiness

The Air Force provides the full range of air, space, and cyber capabilities daily to meet combatant commander requirements. The Air Force continues to provide reliable precision navigation and timing, secured satellite communications, missile warning and space situational awareness capabilities.

Space capabilities provide the United States and our allies unprecedented national security advantages in strategic decision-making, military operations, and homeland security. We plan to achieve greater efficiencies in acquiring space assets by implementing better business practices in satellite and spacelift procurement, establishing more stability in the development process and utilizing block buys in procurement. Spacelift is a critical component of the national security space enterprise. Despite our success, spacelift is still a complex and costly undertaking. Three recent launch studies reached the same conclusion that immediate commitment to a fixed annual production rate for launch vehicles is imperative to sustain the industrial base and control costs. To ensure this commitment, the FY12 budget submission

requests an additional \$3.5B across the FYDP to reach a procurement rate of five DoD launches each year.

The Air Force FY12 budget request includes \$4.6B to sustain and maintain our critical cyberspace capabilities. The Air Force contributes to the Joint force by developing, integrating, and operating cyberspace capabilities in three mission areas: support, defense, and offense. Access to cyberspace is increasingly critical to meet Joint and allied requirements for freedom of maneuver in all domains. Air Force networks face a continuous barrage of assaults from state-sponsored actors, terror networks, international criminal organizations, individual hackers, and all level of threats in between.

The 24th Air Force, the Air Force component of U.S. Cyber Command, achieved full operational capability on October 1, 2010. The Air Force is also aligning education and training programs with our operational approach to cyberspace to develop our cyberspace professionals. In December 2010, we graduated our first cadre of cyberspace operators.

In addition, the Air Force increased situational awareness of Air Force networks while securely improving information sharing and transport capabilities. Investments in additional network defenders increase protection of information vital to Joint force operations. In the offensive mission area, formal training programs for both initial and mission qualification provide trained forces to U.S. Cyber Command when tasked. Additionally, as the lead support agency to U.S. Cyber Command, the Air Force is responsible for the construction and installed infrastructure for the new U.S. Cyber Command Integrated Cyber Center at Fort Meade, Maryland.

## 6. Aircraft Readiness

The dedicated work and professionalism of our Airmen ensures our aircraft inventory is ready despite extensive use in contingency operations and increases in fleet average age. Due to these challenges, modernization and recapitalization of our aircraft remains a very high priority.

The readiness of the Mobility Air Forces remains high while meeting robust and dynamic operational requirements. Our airlift fleet continues to provide strategic airlift as well as theater and direct support airlift missions moving personnel and a wide variety of equipment and supplies. The awarding of the KC-46A contract starts the timeline for recapitalizing our aerial refueling aircraft. The planned acquisition of 179 aircraft will help provide refueling capability for decades to come. We will retire 8 C-5As in FY11 in order to eliminate excess strategic airlift capacity as recommended by the Mobility Capabilities Requirements Study-2016. Modernization and enhancement of the workhorse mobility fleet will continue with the C-5 Reliability Enhancement and Re-engine Program (RERP), the C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP), and the C-17 Block 13-17 upgrade program.

The readiness of Combat Air Forces aircraft is adequate despite challenges from accumulating hours on our fleet faster than envisioned when these aircraft were first fielded. During the FY12 program review, the Air Force delivered to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (OSD CAPE) the Service fighter force position of 1200 Primary Mission Aircraft Inventory (PMAI) and 2000 Total Aircraft Inventory (TAI). Delays in the F-35 program, and decreased funding for F-22 modernization increase reliance on the legacy fighter fleet, driving the need to extend their service life and modernize combat capability. AF actions to extend and modernize the legacy fleet are a bridge to 5th generation capability and are not considered replacement actions. The F-16 Service Life

Extension Program (SLEP) is one example of the effort to mitigate fighter force capacity shortfall. Funding the initial development of a Long Range Strike Family of Systems, including a new penetrating bomber, leveraging proven technologies, and next generation, extended range standoff missiles, allows the Air Force to address anticipated threats. To keep our legacy platforms viable well into the future, the Air Force intends to reestablish itself as a leader in Electronic Warfare through modernization of legacy programs and increased capacity including acceleration of Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar modernization programs, electronic protect software upgrades and adding two additional EC-130H Compass Call aircraft authorizations over the FYDP. Lastly, in the past year, the Air Force dramatically increased the capability to collect, process, and disseminate timely multi-intelligence information to the warfighter by delivering 8 remotely piloted aircraft (MQ-1/9) combat air patrols (CAPs) to U.S. CENTCOM. We are on track to expand the number of MQ-1/9 CAPs to 50 CAPs by end of FY11 and 65 CAPs by end of FY13.

## 7. Nuclear Deterrence

Continuing to strengthen our nuclear enterprise remains the number one Air Force priority, and we have taken positive steps within the FY12 budget request to continue to strengthen and improve this Core Function.

Air Force Global Strike Command achieved full operational capability (FOC) on September 30, 2010, moving all Air Force nuclear-capable bombers and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) under one command. The Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center continues to pursue vital and deliberate sustainment of the nuclear enterprise through efforts such as the Air Force Comprehensive Assessment of Nuclear Sustainment process. As for nuclear



force structure, bomber force modernization continued in an effort to maintain a viable force beyond 2030. We have completed the transition to four B-52 operational squadrons with the addition of the 69th Bomb Squadron at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. ICBM modernization and sustainment also continued with investments in new test equipment and launch facility environmental control systems.

The Air Force has completed a number of assessments to address systemic issues with ICBM infrastructure and operating procedures as well as a report on the age and pedigree of the infrastructure and equipment associated with the ICBM system. Based on these assessments, it is clear that a significant portion of the existing infrastructure will eventually require modernization or complete replacement in the years ahead.

The Air Force budget request of \$5.2B continues to invest in the future of nuclear deterrence. The Air Force is committed to sustaining the ICBM force through 2030 with investment including command and control, cryptographic improvements and ballistic missile fuse sustainment. The budget request also includes other programs such as the tail kit portion of the B61 nuclear weapon life extension program, the future long-range standoff weapon, and the Common Vertical Lift Support Platform that highlight our efforts of strengthening the future of nuclear deterrence. Beyond weapon system sustainment and modernization, the Air Force is focusing on human capital as we carefully balance requirements for our limited, intensively scrutinized, high-demand Airmen in the nuclear enterprise.

The Air Force is prepared for a new verification regime and is planning for the elimination and conversion of launchers under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. We will work with the OSD and U.S. Strategic Command to identify and assess options for future force structure adjustments consistent with the Treaty provisions.

## 7. Conclusion

Air Force personnel, weapon systems, equipment, and organizations are prepared for today's operations and tomorrow's uncertain challenges, despite fiscal challenges and high operations tempo. With an uncompromising commitment to our core values of integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do, the Air Force remains ready to provide global vigilance, reach and power for America.