

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

SUBJECT: READINESS POSTURE OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE

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INTRODUCTION

America's Air Force has conducted 22 years of sustained combat operations and is continuing to meet high operational tempo demands to support today's fight. This has inevitably taken a toll on our weapons systems and people, and has strained and degraded the overall readiness of the force. The Air Force fiscal year 2014 (FY14) budget request attempts to align resources to slow our readiness decline and set the stage for restoring full-spectrum readiness. However, the current fiscal environment threatens to derail these efforts and put into jeopardy the Air Force's ability to meet combatant commander requirements. The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific and our continued presence in the Middle East and Africa indicate that the demand for Air Force capabilities will remain constant, or perhaps even rise, over the next decade. To ensure that our Airmen can continue to contribute our five enduring core missions to the joint team, our readiness must improve.

READINESS

The Air Force provides *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America through its five core missions of air and space superiority, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), rapid global mobility, global strike, and command and control. By integrating capabilities across these core missions, we bring a unique set of options to deter war, deliver rapid, life-saving responses to threatened areas anywhere on the planet, and strike hard and precisely wherever and whenever the national interest demands.

The cornerstone of our Airmen's ability to provide airpower to the Nation and contribute our core missions to the joint team is their readiness. "Readiness" is the ability of a unit to provide its designed operational capabilities within the required timeframe. It is comprised of personnel requirements, training (to include flying hours), weapon system sustainment, and

infrastructure. A responsive readiness posture depends on good health in all of these key areas. While protecting future readiness includes modernizing weapons systems and equipment, creating combat readiness in the near-term is a complex task involving the intersection of personnel, materiel, and training. It includes balancing time between operational and training commitments, funding from multiple sources, informed levels of risk, and effectively managing resources to achieve the desired state of readiness. Within this balance, we must recognize that readiness is not merely a funding issue, we must also manage deployment and operational tempo to permit time for full-spectrum training.

The Air Force supports combatant command missions that require 24/7 availability. Space operations, command and control, cyber defense, ISR, special operations, personnel recovery, and nuclear deterrence are all high priority missions that cannot be done adequately, and in some cases cannot be done safely, at low readiness levels. In support of U.S. defense strategy, our Air Force must be capable of quickly responding and shifting between theaters of operation. Allowing the Air Force to slip to a lower state of readiness that requires a long buildup to full combat effectiveness negates the essential strategic advantages of airpower and puts joint forces at increased risk.

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013, combined with sequestration reductions, results in approximately \$4.4 billion less than our request from our operations and maintenance accounts from which we fund some of our foundational readiness programs, including weapons system sustainment (WSS) and our flying hour program (FHP). Sequestration will reduce WSS and FHP by about \$2.1 billion for the Active component from our original FY13 budget request. These cuts will affect FY14 and beyond by driving down

aircraft availability rates, and potentially preventing our ability to fly additional hours even if funded.

The President's Budget (PB) includes balanced deficit reduction proposals that would allow Congress to replace and repeal sequestration in FY13 and the associated cap reductions in FY14-21. If sequestration is not replaced, the Air Force will have to rebuild degraded unit readiness, accept further delays to modernization, absorb the backlog in depot maintenance inductions, and invest additional funding to restore infrastructure. However, because sequestration impacts are already occurring, even if our readiness programs are funded to the levels requested in the FY14 PB, our readiness levels may still not recover to pre-sequester levels in FY14. If the post-sequester funding caps remain in effect, the Air Force will be unable to reinvigorate readiness and align with the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG). Sequestration will have devastating impacts to readiness, will significantly affect our modernization programs, and may cause further force structure reductions.

Weapons System Sustainment

WSS is a key component of full-spectrum readiness. Years of combat demands have taken a toll across many weapon systems, we continue to see an increase in the costs of WSS requirements, which are driven by sustainment strategy, complexity of weapon systems, operations tempo, force structure changes, and growth in depot work packages for aging, legacy aircraft. A primary objective in the FY14 budget request continues our ongoing goal to slow and reverse the erosion of Air Force readiness. The request adds \$1.5 billion across the FYDP to WSS to restore aircraft and space systems readiness.

The 18 percent reduction to the WSS portfolio cuts approximately \$1.7 billion over the FYDP, and the impacts will be felt across the Total Force. We are planning to fund WSS at 81

percent of the FY14 requirement using funds from the base budget as well as overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds. Due to Operations and Maintenance funding cuts this fiscal year, we currently project deferring 60 aircraft and 35 engines across 30 weapon systems in FY13, impacting depot workloads and availability of combat weapons systems in FY14.

History tells us that recovery in our depots from the impacts of sequestration will require two to three years to regain the same level of production even with additional funding in FY14 to minimize the bow-wave of work. Additionally, these operational impacts will be particularly severe because 77 percent of the depot workforce is civilian. The impact of potential civilian furloughs will be especially crippling and drive a reduction in depot workload production, increase carryover, reduce supply chain spares for operational units, degrade workforce proficiency, and ensure future volatility and higher operational costs.

Flying Hour Program

The emphasis on readiness in the DSG reinforced the Air Force focus on the importance of maintaining our FHP as part of our full-spectrum readiness. For the FY14 budget request, the Air Force balanced the allocation of flying hours across the Total Force to maintain—and in some cases—incrementally improve readiness levels.

However, as with WSS, sequestration affects our ability to improve readiness, and in fact, readiness levels are already declining. Lost flight hours have caused unit stand-downs which will result in severe, rapid, and long-term unit combat readiness degradation. We have already ceased operations for one-third of our Active component fighter and bomber force and they will remain stood-down for FY13. Within 60 days of a stand down, these units will not be ready to meet emergent or operations plans requirements. Lost currency training requires approximately six months to return to current sub-optimal levels, with desired flying proficiency for

crewmembers requiring even longer. This recovery requires adequate funding above FY14 PB levels for both FHP and WSS.

The flying hour program will continue to rely on OCO funding to support Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and the redeployment of combat forces from Afghanistan. With the expectation of decreasing OCO flying hours, we have programmed increasing operations and maintenance (O&M)-funded flying hours in FY15 and throughout the FYDP. Beginning in FY15, the program meets approximately 90 percent of the peacetime training requirement to attain full-spectrum readiness across the Total Force.

Training Readiness

The Air Force is committed to a long-term effort to increase our live, virtual, and constructive operational training (LVC-OT) capability and capacity by funding improvements in LVC-OT devices (e.g., simulators and virtual trainers) and networks. Adjustments to the flying hour program will continue to evolve as the fidelity of simulators and LVC-OT capabilities improve. Increasing our virtual capabilities will minimize fuel consumption and aircraft maintenance costs while ensuring high quality training for our aircrews.

Full-spectrum training also includes the availability and sustainability of air-to-air and air-to-ground training ranges. Many of our ranges are venues for large-scale joint and coalition training events and are critical enablers for concepts like Air-Sea Battle. In FY14, we are increasing funding to ensure sustainment of these crucial national assets, which elevate flying training effectiveness for individuals, units, and the entire joint team.

Sustainment is important, but ranges require investment as well, and budget pressures will further challenge our ability to provide the warfighter with realistic and relevant test and training ranges. Our ranges, having steadily evolved to meet the needs for combat operations in Iraq and

Afghanistan, now require substantial reinvestment to meet the demands of advanced sensors, full-spectrum warfare and a strategy rebalancing to the Pacific. Since Active component ranges rely principally on government civilians and contractors, sequestration and potential furloughs threaten the continuity of range operations. We are especially concerned that terminating range contracts may result in the loss of highly-specialized personnel not easily replaced. All of our ranges face varying degrees of encroachment from population growth, commercial development of adjacent land, commercial spectrum demands and increased civil aviation. The Air Force is diligently managing the effects of encroachment on our ranges while exploring every avenue to minimize the effects of reduced funding on range capabilities and readiness. Readiness and Modernization

The decline in future budgets does not allow us to maintain force structure and continue all planned investment programs while also improving readiness. To prioritize readiness, we have made a conscious choice to assume additional risk in some modernization programs. Although we have been more effective in our use of operating resources and garnered savings from better business practices, the Air Force has been forced to terminate or restructure several programs. Program restructures and terminations include terminating the Space Based Surveillance Block 10 follow-on, freezing Gorgon Stare at Increment II, terminating Air Force participation in the Joint Precision Approach and Landing System land-based segment. In addition, several key modernization priorities were deferred, including a replacement for the aging T-38 trainer and the JSTARS surveillance aircraft.

To achieve the readiness levels we desire, the Air Force needs sustained modernization. For example, our legacy, or fourth generation, fighter fleet has secured more than 20 years of an air superiority advantage, but may lose its ability operate as effectively in contested

environments. Weapon systems like the F-22, with contributions from the F-35, are what will carry America's Air Force forward to continue to provide air superiority. During F-35 development, it is imperative that we maintain our fourth-generation fighter fleet. Therefore, at least 300 F-16s will undergo a service life extension program and a capability enhancement called Combat Avionics Programmed Extension Suite, which permits them to remain relevant in the near-term threat environment until the F-35 is available in sufficient numbers. We are also upgrading the F-15 fleet's radar and electronic warfare capabilities that will permit it to operate in conjunction with fifth-generation aircraft in the future threat environment.

Other top modernization programs include the KC-46A and the Long Range Strike-Bomber (LRS-B). Because the future will likely call for us to provide rapid global mobility to remote, austere locations in contested environments, we will require a very capable tanker fleet. The KC-46A program will ensure that our Nation retains a tanker fleet able to provide crucial air refueling capacity worldwide for decades to come. The LRS-B is a key piece of the development of our long range strike family of systems, the capabilities of which are critical to our ability to carry out our global strike mission.

America's Air Force remains the most capable in the world, but we cannot allow readiness levels to decline further and modernization cannot wait for the next cycle of increased defense spending. We have important production lines under way and development programs that are, or will soon be, mature enough for production. Cancelling programs in anticipation of a future generation of technology would be wasteful and, in some cases, risk the loss of critical engineering talent and technological advantage. New threats and corresponding investment needs are not theoretical future possibilities. They are here, now. Air superiority and long-range strike capabilities cannot be assumed. Significant investment in fifth-generation platforms and

munitions is essential to address these threats. The future success of the Nation's military and the joint team depends on modernizing our Air Force and keeping it ready to fight.

Infrastructure

Ready installations are an integral part of ensuring a ready Air Force. We consider our installations "power projection platforms" from which we employ our enduring airpower core missions, increase responsiveness, and ensure global access across the full spectrum of military operations. As such, the health of our installations directly contribute to overall Air Force readiness. Our Air Force installation investment strategy for FY14 focuses on the Air Force's enduring core missions and on building sustainable installations to enable the DSG. Consistent with the DSG, another key focus area for the Air Force is the Asia-Pacific theater and Guam remains a vital and accessible location in the western Pacific. For the past eight years, Joint Region Marianas-Andersen Air Force Base has accommodated a continual presence of our Nation's premier air assets. It will continue to serve as the strategic and operational nucleus and logistics hub for military operations, originating from and transiting through the area of responsibility in support of the full spectrum of crises. To fully support Pacific Command's strategy, the Air Force is committed to hardening critical infrastructure, including select hangars, as part of Pacific Airpower Resiliency. This strategy is a comprehensive initiative that also includes dispersal and rapid recovery capabilities after attack.

Space and Cyber Readiness

Any potential furloughs brought about by sequestration will impact space and cyber operations. Air Force civilians, as well as support contractors, provide continuity and deep expertise in space and cyber mission areas. We depend on our civilians as much as we depend on our military personnel to operate our space and cyber systems. Civilian and contract

personnel represent over 50 percent of Air Force Space Command's workforce and over 40 percent of the Air Force cyber workforce. The Air Force will mitigate these impacts as much as possible by managing leave and furlough schedules to ensure critical coverage of operations and events. However, over time, operational responsiveness will become more challenging as we are asked to do more with fewer personnel. Additionally, a reduction in support contractors in all areas will increase maintenance repair times and lead to a maintenance backlog, also resulting in reduced readiness.

In addition to potential furloughs, impacts in operations and maintenance accounts and in WSS accounts will increase operational risk in the space mission area. These reductions have driven reduced operations at one of our missile warning sites. However, the risk is reduced by the combination of missile warning satellite coverage and two overlapping ground based missile warning radars. Moreover, the radar can be recalled to full operation in a relatively short time and will be returned to full operations in heightened states of readiness. We have also started a reduction in the number of sites within our space surveillance system. This reduction could delay the detection and characterization of satellite breakups over time. Additional operations risks could occur over time as impacts from reduced WSS are fully realized.

ISR Shortfalls

Sequestration will impede our ISR investment programs at the precise time we need to invest and modernize our force structure to meet a new complex security environment. These program disruptions will cost, over time, more taxpayer dollars as we rectify contract restructures and program inefficiencies, raise unit costs, and delay delivery of validated capabilities to warfighters in the field. In FY14, our ISR budget request maintains investments in the ground stations, manned and unmanned ISR Weapons Systems. While the Air Force

remains on track to field 65 MQ-1B Predator and MQ-9A Reaper combat air patrols (CAPs) by May 2014 to maintain our ability to conduct counterterrorism operations, this Force was built to operate in a highly permissive threat environment. This ISR capability has grown 4,300 percent since 2000, but its survivability in contested environments is questionable. The enduring and universal requirement for ISR capabilities needed to operate in a complex and dangerous security environment, drives the need to modernize our ISR forces. The Air Force's FY14 budget request of \$7.1 billion for ISR which includes investment in advanced sensors; automated analytical tools to deal with the massive growth of ISR data; and additional production capacity for intelligence mission data required to enable fifth generation aircraft operating in contested environments. These investments advance our vision of an all-source, all-domain, resilient collection and analysis enterprise integrated with Air Force, Joint, Coalition, and Intelligence Community command and control architectures.

Munitions Shortfalls

The Air Force projects preferred munitions shortfalls within the FYDP based on the latest funding profiles and non-nuclear consumables annual analysis, including AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM), Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile – Extended Range (JASSM-ER), Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), Laser JDAM, AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, Small Diameter Bomb II (SDB II), general purpose and penetrator bomb bodies, and fuzes. The predicted inventories of the munitions listed range from 15-80 percent of the objective by FY19. The Air Force is working within its topline obligation authority to attempt to mitigate the shortfalls. Funding priority is being given to preferred munitions such as AIM-120, JASSM-ER and SDB II. Other munitions are funded at minimum sustainment rates in order to maintain the ability to produce the items if and when funding is available. The Air

Force, along with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the other Services, is also examining the phased threat distribution and target templates within the munitions requirements process to ensure stated total munitions requirements are accurate and realistic. Operationally, the Air Force will mitigate the shortfalls of preferred munitions where possible by supplementing or substituting them with non-preferred munitions (e.g. unguided general purpose weapons). This approach will result in a higher number of missions, a higher number of weapons employed, a higher risk to aircrew, higher attrition of assets, increased time to complete objectives, and increased collateral damage.

Total Force Task Force

As important as it is to maintain a ready and capable force, it is equally critical to ensure a trained and capable cadre of personnel to meet the challenges of the future. This requires the Air Force to maintain a balance across all three components—Active, Guard, and Reserve. In response to evolving strategic environment and fiscal constraints, the Air Force launched the Total Force Task Force (TF2), led by three two-star general officers from the Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve. The TF2's mission is to conduct a comprehensive review of Total Force requirements and develop strategic options that leverage the inherent strengths and unique characteristics of each component. Additionally, upon request, the task force will serve as a focal point for the Congressionally-mandated National Commission on the Structure for the Air Force.

CONCLUSION

The Air Force's core missions will continue to serve America's long-term security interests by giving our Nation and its leadership unmatched options against the challenges of an unpredictable future. In the last several decades, Air Force airpower has been an indispensable

element of deterrence, controlled escalation, and, when so tasked by the Nation's leadership, destruction of an adversary's military capability—all accomplished with minimal casualties to U.S. servicemen and women and civilians. However, investments in Air Force capabilities and readiness remain essential to ensuring that the Nation will maintain an agile, flexible, and ready force. This force must be deliberately planned and consistently funded, as reconstitution of a highly sophisticated and capable Air Force cannot occur quickly if allowed to atrophy.

Today's Air Force provides America an indispensable hedge against the challenges of a dangerous and uncertain future, providing viable foreign policy options exclusive of a large military commitment on foreign soil. Regardless of the future security environment, the Air Force must retain and maintain its unique ability to provide America with *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power*.