

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL  
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL  
PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL  
YEAR 2011 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

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## **Introduction**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Air Force's most important resource – our Airmen. This diverse group of highly-skilled and dedicated men and women ensure our Air Force remains the most powerful in the world. Our Airmen have been continuously deployed and globally engaged in combat missions for over nineteen straight years. Approximately 38,800 Airmen are currently deployed in support of joint operations across the globe. Of these, over 4,000 Airmen are filling Joint Expeditionary Taskings in non-traditional roles in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Thousands more are providing critical direct support to our combatant commanders from their home station. These critical capabilities include space systems such as GPS, rapid global mobility of people and supplies, as well as intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance from space and remotely piloted aircraft. Our Airmen are committed to winning today's fight and prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

As the Air Force's Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, I am focused on accomplishing the Air Force's priorities by developing and implementing programs and policies to best leverage our total force – active, guard, reserve and civilians – to maximize our combat capability for the joint commanders. To that end, I have made Continuum of Service (CoS), which will allow for smooth transfer of skilled Airmen between components, and increasing the diversity of our force high priorities. I am also attuned to the overall health of our force. We are working essential programs that support our wounded warriors, help Airmen reintegrate after deployments, provide families with the support they need and minimize the incidents of sexual assault and suicide to name just a few.

## **End Strength and Force Management**

With the Fiscal Year 2010 NDAA, our current approved total force end strength is 686,944. This includes 331,700 Active Component, 179,044 civilians, 69,500 Reserve; and 106,700 Air National Guard. In the Fiscal Year 2011 budget request, our programmed total force end strength is 702,669. This includes 332,200 Active Component, 192,569 civilians, 71,200 Reserve, and Air National Guard end strength remaining at 106,700.

The Air Force's Fiscal Year 2011 budget request preserved end strength in the face of fiscal constraints, realigned Active Component and Reserve manpower within existing resources, and grew civilian end strength to meet Air Force priorities. Major manpower drivers include

initial investment toward remotely piloted aircraft fleet operational capability to 65 combat air patrols; enhancing cyberspace/irregular warfare/command & control capabilities; and resourcing required Air Force priorities to include Acquisition Excellence, further enhancements to Nuclear Enterprise, and developing and caring for our Airmen and their families while rebalancing our total force mix for agile combat support.

Maintaining the optimum overall force size as well as balancing critical skill-sets is a routine part of the Air Force's force management efforts. The current downturn in the economy has had a direct impact on the Air Force's lower attrition rates projected in Fiscal Year 2010. As a result, the Air Force is expected to exceed end strength by about 3,700 Airmen (2,100 officers and 1,600 enlisted) in Fiscal Year 2010. Although this increase would fall under the Secretary of the Air Force's purview of 2% over authorized end strength, the Air Force implemented a force management plan to bring this back in alignment. In Fiscal Year 2010, we made small adjustments in several areas including limited reductions of officer and enlisted accessions, increased service commitment waivers, waived enlisted time-in-grade requirements for retirement, and we are implementing an additional enlisted date-of-separation rollback. We are continually monitoring results from these actions and to date we have achieved about 50% of our Fiscal Year 2010 force management goal. Even with these efforts, we do not expect these actions to fully achieve the reductions targeted for Fiscal Year 2010. As a result, we will likely continue many of these actions and consider other force management options for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2010 and in Fiscal Year 2011 as needed. Utilizing force management tools is a necessary and routine leadership obligation to ensure the Air Force remains within authorized strength levels and get the right balance of grades and skills to meet our evolving mission requirements. However, we strive to use these force management tools in a deliberate manner with the least disruption to the cohesion of the force.

### **Recruiting**

Even in a time of higher retention and a struggling economy, recruiting the highest quality Airmen is as important as ever. Our recruiting force continues to achieve the enlisted accession mission with integrity and excellence. In Fiscal Year 2009, we met mission requirements for enlisted recruiting in all components (Active, Guard, and Reserve). To date in Fiscal Year 2010 we have achieved 100% of our active-duty accession goals and 100% and 112% of our Reserve and Guard accession goals, respectively.

Although we have achieved mission goals in our line officer accession programs, we continue to struggle with health professions officer recruitment and retention. In Fiscal Year 2009, we recruited approximately 70% of officer health professions requirements exceeding the Fiscal Year 2008 production of 62%. The on-going high-demand for medical professionals in the lucrative civilian market makes it difficult for the Air Force to attract and retain fully qualified individuals. As a result, in 2006 the Air Force implemented a long-term “grow our own” strategy by offering more medical school scholarships in student-based markets. In Fiscal Year 2008, we filled 431 of 437 available scholarships (98.6%) and for Fiscal Year 2009, we accessed 376 of 371 scholarships (101%). In Fiscal Year 2010, we are on track to achieve a 100% scholarship fill rate. Our main shortfall in recruiting is attracting fully-qualified medical professionals to come straight into the service particularly in the Biomedical Science Corps. Psychology, Pharmacy, Optometry and Public Health Officers continue to be challenging to recruit. Our continued challenges in the health professions are why we have submitted \$85.7 million in this year’s budget request for officer bonuses to attract and retain more medical professionals on active duty. We are appreciative of and ask for your continued support in this area.

Although recruitment is also strong in the Reserve and Air National Guard, they face challenges with fewer prior-service members due to lower Active Component attrition rates and increased requirements for new and emerging mission specialties. As a result, both the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve have had to increase their non-prior service recruitment efforts. In fact, the Reserve non-prior service recruiting requirement has nearly doubled since the end of Fiscal Year 2007. Increased recruitment of non-prior service members for both Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve has directly resulted in increased recruitment costs as well as increased training costs over that of already trained prior-service members. The continued support of the Air Force, Department of Defense and Congress will undoubtedly shape the foundation of their success.

### **Retention**

Although overall officer retention has remained strong, we have had challenges with retention of rated officers, some critical skills and some health profession specialties. To address our rated officer shortages, we implemented a rated recall program to bring back 500 trained pilots to help fill our rated staff positions allowing more current pilots to return to the cockpit.

The Air Force prudently employs Special and Incentive (S&I) pays to compensate for and incentivize the performance of hazardous and arduous duties, the acceptance of duty in hostile or remote and isolated locations, and the recruiting and retention of personnel with specific skills or in specific career fields. Fiscal Year 2010 Active Component recruiting and retention S&I pays total \$465.9 million. For Fiscal Year 2011, we have requested this be increased to \$480.1million. This increase is due to changing eligible populations, anniversary payments, and the addition of retention bonuses for five (5) stressed officer career fields. Our S&I pays are critical as we shape the force to meet new and emerging missions and support the combatant commanders in today's fight.

The quality of Air National Guard recruits has not declined and their retention rate remains strong at 96.9-percent. The Air National Guard saves on average \$62,000 in training costs for every qualified member retained or recruited. Our focus in this area allows us to retain critical skills lost from the active component and save valuable training dollars. In 2009, through the use of our 14 In-Service Air National Guard recruiters strategically placed at active duty bases, the Air National Guard garnered approximately 896 confirmed accessions of a total of 5,309 accessions. The bonuses and incentive programs are a key component to that success.

Retention for the Air Force Reserve remains solid with First Term Airmen retention being the highest in recent history. Likewise, Second Term and Career Airmen retention has rebounded following a drop in recent years due in-part to force structure changes. Although we have not formally studied the causes, we attribute this increase in retention rates primarily to the recent legislative authorizations congress has approved that enhance incentives to remain in the service like inactive duty training (IDT) travel pay, streamlining of TRICARE Reserve Select premiums, enhanced bonuses and the Post 9-11 GI Bill. We anticipate this positive trend in retention will continue for the foreseeable future.

### **Civilian Personnel**

Management of the civilian workforce will continue to be a priority for the Air Force. We are working collaboratively with the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy on Strategic Human Capital Planning efforts, in particular, to address the provisions in Fiscal Year 2010 NDAA which require reporting by the Military Departments. We support this effort that will result in the Air Force and the Department of Defense (DoD) having the skills and competencies necessary to meet our current and future mission requirements.

In October, 2009, the President signed into law the NDAA 2010 that repeals the authority for NSPS and requires DoD to transition civilian employees from NSPS to the appropriate statutory non-NSPS personnel and pay system not later than January 1, 2012. The Air Force has approximately 44,000 employees in NSPS. We are aggressively planning and preparing to transition these Air Force employees in an orderly and timely manner. We have begun the process of reclassification of positions, where necessary. We will soon issue a conversion plan that will inform and assist our human resource practitioners, supervisors, managers and employees to understand the transition process and to facilitate the transition. The NDAA also provided additional personnel flexibilities which we will be pursuing in conjunction with DoD and the Office of Personnel Management.

### **Diversity**

Diversity is an integral part of mission accomplishment and success in today's Air Force and will remain in the forefront as we continue to inclusively attract, develop, and retain highly qualified professionals for the betterment of the Total Force. The capacity to educate, manage, lead, and train a diverse force is a core competency of Air Force leadership. Currently, we are pursuing collaborative diversity outreach initiatives with Air University, Civil Air Patrol, Junior and Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Officer Training School and the United States Air Force Academy. Additionally, strategic plans are being formalized to utilize the Air Force Diversity Champions to promulgate the aims of diversity within the Air Force and the community. Areas of interests and emphasis to cultivate and develop future leaders of the Total Force will include reaching out to students enrolled in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs in high schools, colleges and universities across the nation.

As the demographics of the nation continue to change, the Air Force must position itself to optimize the true benefits of a diverse force and respectfully request appropriate Congressional funding for the sustainment of the aforementioned outreach initiatives. By incorporating diversity management leadership principles and strategies to leverage the unique qualities and talents of all citizens, the Air Force will achieve mission excellence and sustain dominance in air, space, and cyberspace.

### **Continuum of Service**

An important aspect of retention is our ability as a Service to allow skilled Airmen to easily transfer from one component to another providing the Air Force flexibility while retaining

valuable skills. CoS transforms the operating culture and paradigms to shape the future of personnel and manpower delivery throughout the Air Force to meet global mission requirements.

CoS efforts have already positively impacted our Air Force members through a number of initiatives. Through our on-line CoS Tracking Tool (CoSTT), any Airman can submit a proposal for a CoS initiative. Our tool was modified for use by the Army and is now being adapted for use throughout the Department of Defense. Continuum of Service initiatives have already improved our join-spouse PCS process, interservice transfer of rated officers and helped facilitate the establishment of the Religious Professional Scholarship Program (RPSP) allowing members to attend seminary and later return to active duty. The RPSP is designed to help fill manning shortfalls within the chaplaincy for underrepresented faiths within the Air Force. This program is now being considered for utilization by my Navy and Army counterparts. In addition, CoS helped modify the chaplain accession age ceiling from 42 to 47.

Some current Air Force CoS initiatives include 1) aligning the Air Reserve Component pregnancy policy with that of the Army and Marine Corps to allow pregnant women to work until her orders expire; 2) changing AF policy on “Lawful Permanent Resident” accessions for critical specialties by utilizing current laws permitting the appointment of a Reserve Component officer who has been lawfully admitted to the United States; 3) evaluating the authority provided in the Fiscal Year 2009 NDAA by considering a “Career Intermission Pilot Program” to determine whether a more flexible career path will prove to be an effective retention tool; and 4) examining the effects of changes to AF policy that would bring fully qualified personnel into stressed career fields faster than traditional methods by recognizing the value of non-governmental experience.

The Air Force CoS program is an important force multiplier as it not only helps our Airmen transition between components, but also balances people and mission to ensure the right Airman is in the fight. We greatly appreciate the outstanding support of the SASC Personnel Sub-Committee on many of our Continuum of Service initiatives.

### **Suicide Prevention**

Preventing suicide among our Airmen is extremely important to the well-being of our force. The Air Force developed the basis for its suicide prevention program in 1993 and it is one of ten suicide prevention programs listed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

Although this program resulted in a reduction in the number of suicides among Airmen, within the Air Force we have recognized the importance of a multi-faceted approach to meet the varied needs of our people. Since the initial program began, we have placed a strong emphasis on leadership involvement in preventing suicides. Training has been implemented in various professional military education curricula to create awareness among Air Force leaders and front-line supervisors of behaviors that may lead to suicide and to inform leadership of actions they can take to prevent suicide. We have identified specific career fields in which the requirements of the job place enormous stress on Airmen and we are developing targeted programs to improve resiliency and encourage Airmen to seek help early. To facilitate the seeking of mental health services, we have placed behavioral health specialists in our primary care clinics.

Additionally, we emphasize community involvement in suicide prevention, combining the efforts of chaplains, family counselors, and other non-medical counselors to meet the psychological health needs of Airmen. Finally, we collaborate with our sister Services, with the Defense Center of Excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health, and with the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify best practices and continuously improve our existing suicide prevention program. Recently, the Air Force Surgeon General took the lead in implementing a two-tiered program to create and enhance psychological resiliency in deploying and returning Airmen. This program includes a two-day decompression program when the Airmen return from theater. We believe one suicide is one too many and are strongly committed to preventing suicides and caring for our Airmen.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)**

Preventing sexual assault is also a top Air Force priority. Since program implementation in 2005, the Air Force has maintained a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing sexual assault that supports home-stationed and deployed Airmen. A robust Air Force response to victims includes dedicated full-time civilian and military Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and more than 2,600 volunteer victim advocates who provide 24/7/365 support. Our robust Air Force SAPR program budget funds 80 civilian and 29 military officer SARCs at the installation level, who work directly for the Vice Wing Commander. Our military SARCs provide a full-time deployed capability at seven primary deployment locations. The Secretary of the Air Force recently approved the addition of 24 AFOSI agents trained and dedicated to



investigate sexual assault. Caring and professional response to victims has been a focus of the Air Force program but equally important is our focus to prevent the crime before it occurs.

The primary challenge of addressing sexual assault in the military and society at large is to confront a culture where sexual assault is allowed to exist. It requires a positive, ongoing effort to educate our Airmen and others, about the realities of sexual assault, debunking myths that continue to be propagated by media and entertainment, and maintained by peer pressure or other societal convention. The Air Force has developed a prevention-based approach that directly focuses on fostering positive behavior that is in concert with our core values. The approach includes leadership focus from the top down, risk reduction, and bystander intervention training. The latter is a strategy that motivates and mobilizes people who may see, hear, or recognize signs of an inappropriate or unsafe situation, to act.

We will be working with Dr. Stanley, OSD (P&R), and our Sister Services to address the recommendations in the report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services (DTFSAMS). Sexual assault is a crime. The Air Force is dedicated to the elimination of this crime and we recognize the challenges dealing with this very complex issue.

### **Year of the Air Force Family**

In the spring of 2009, the Air Force renewed its longstanding commitment to taking care of our Airmen and families by designating July 2009 through July 2010 as “Year of the Air Force Family.” The observance serves two primary purposes. Across the Air Force, we examined our support services and policies in order to expand or refine them as required to meet the emerging needs and expectations of our Airmen, their families and the larger Air Force Family. Secondly, we set aside specific time to recognize the sacrifices and contributions of all of the members of our Air Force Family, our Active, Reserve and Guard, civilians, spouses and family members.

We have focused our efforts to ensure we provide robust programs to meet the unique needs of our Guard and Reserve members and their families. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is one important way we are accomplishing this. The Air Force is working alongside other services in this DoD-wide effort to ensure the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Airmen and their families are connected with all of the appropriate resources before, during and after deployments. We continue to focus on the reintegration phase after returning home and ensure that commanders are involved and aware throughout. We continue to improve our

effectiveness and relationships with other associations such as the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor in providing current and relevant information to members. The AF remains focused on airmen and their families and will ensure the oversight and success of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Additionally, we are ensuring the Year of the Air Force Family does not overlook our “extended Family” our retirees, parents and the nongovernmental and community partners that support Air Force people every day across the nation. We are using this year long period to launch our sharper focus on improving support to Airmen and families. Under Secretary Donley’s leadership, our concerted attention on providing the support that results in stronger, more resilient Airmen and families will remain a priority in the years to come.

In April 2010, we will hold a Caring for People Forum that will bring together helping professionals, Airmen and family members to develop an action plan to address the pressing and longer term concerns of Airmen and families which will be briefed to senior leadership at the end of the forum.

We are working to strengthen all of the partnerships that contribute to the quality of life for our members. These will include close rapport with local school districts (to enhance quality education and garner on-site support for children impacted by repeated deployments), housing privatization projects and agreements between our bases and city or county services.

### **Wounded Warrior and Survivor Care**

The Air Force Wounded Warrior program focuses on the needs of recovering Airmen and their families, as well as families of the fallen. We now have 17 Recovery Care Coordinators (RCC) in 15 locations, with an additional 10 RCCs being hired this year. Our RCCs are the primary point of contact for our wounded, ill, and injured Airmen and ensure the health care, financial, informational, and personal needs of Airmen and their families are available in a timely manner. Because of the range of questions Airmen and families have after an injury or illness has incurred, it is critical to the healing process to have relevant and accurate information available to our Airmen. Recovery Care Coordinators are in place to ensure those knowledgeable in medical and other areas of expertise are available to provide the requested information. This assistance is provided for as long as the Airmen and families want assistance during recovery, rehabilitation, and re-integration. The Air Force also continues to work closely with the Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy in the Office of the Secretary of

Defense to ensure our programs continue to support all wounded, ill and injured service members. It is our solemn duty that these Airmen receive the utmost support and care.

### **Conclusion**

I am continually impressed, but not surprised, by the tremendous hard work and focus our Airmen display daily as they accomplish their missions. I am dedicated to providing them the best programs and support, removing any policy barriers and pursuing innovative ways to streamline our processes to allow them to be even more effective. Our Air Force is a critical component to our Nation's defense as we are faced with uncertain and ever changing threats.

We appreciate your unfailing support to the men and women of our Air Force, and I look forward to your questions.