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SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE  
SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 7, 2012

SUBJECT: ASSESSING MOBILITY AIRCRAFT CAPABILITIES AND OPERATIONAL  
RISKS UNDER THE REVISED 2012 DEFENSE STRATEGY

STATEMENT OF: General Raymond E. Johns, Jr.  
Commander  
Air Mobility Command

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Akin, Ranking Member McIntyre, distinguished Members of the sub-committee, thank you for allowing us to come before you today. I'm especially pleased to be joined today by General Wyatt; we could not accomplish our mission without the support of National Guard Airmen. Air Mobility Command is made up 135,000 Airmen who belong to the active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. We provide Global Reach for the Nation as part of the Mobility Air Forces and we are proud stewards of this national capability. No other nation can project power on a global scale in the manner your Air Force can, and the Mobility Air Forces are the foundation of this. We support the entire spectrum of operations, from humanitarian to combat. We answer the call so that others may prevail and that was never truer than in 2011. Over February and March we were supporting air refueling operations over Libya, providing disaster relief to tsunami ravaged Japan, airdropping critical supplies to forces in Afghanistan and redeploying forces from Iraq. On one of our busier days during this period, we executed 16 million ton miles (MTM) of airlift including organic, commercial and passenger missions. That level of support represents only 30 percent of the total capacity of the organic and commercial partner (CRAF) strategic airlift fleets.

Last year our Airmen airdropped nearly 80 million pounds of combat supplies to our forward operating bases in Afghanistan; more than in the entire Korean War, and we accomplished that with a fraction of the overall air mobility fleet. That's what Global Reach means to the Nation and we are committed to ensuring the options our senior leaders have today remain for generations to come.

At the same time, we are keenly aware of the current fiscal environment and we take very seriously our role in assuring America receives a sufficient and effective capability at the lowest cost possible. We believe the FY13 President's Budget request meets those two requirements and support the request in the strongest terms possible.

## **Supporting Forces**

We provide forces as the air component of United States Transportation Command (USTC). They in turn work directly with the geographic combatant commanders (GCC) to ensure logistics requirements for contingency operations are feasible. We do not determine the

requirement, but we are responsible for ensuring our Airmen and our aircraft fleet can meet the requirement we are given. The solutions we arrive at to meet that requirement are the product of analyses by not only our command, but Headquarters Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

### **Historical Perspective**

We understand that the air mobility portion of the FY13 PB request might seem to some as the product of a simple budget cutting drill. It is no revelation to this committee that the Department of Defense was charged with reducing our total obligations by \$487 billion over 10 years. Air mobility was not immune to that process. I can assure to you that the choices made were done using all analysis available. The FY12 air mobility fleet is based on the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study-2016 (MCRS-16). That study considered a range of scenarios, the most demanding of which was two near simultaneous large scale campaigns. This scenario generated an organic strategic airlift requirement of 32.7 MTM/D, an organic tactical airlift requirement of 335 C-130s and a sustained tanker requirement of over 500 aircraft. The time sensitive/mission critical direct support- airlift mission (TS/MC) was not included in MCRS-16, but was evaluated by a RAND study entitled "*Intratheater Lift – Direct Support*" completed in 2010. The RAND study provided a range of tactical aircraft required for the TS/MC mission, from 42 to 86 coincident to risk, from high to low. The FY12 PB supported 58 tactical airlift aircraft for the TS/MC mission, 20 C-130s and 38 C-27Js.

Within months of MCRS-16 being published in 2010, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) reflected new directions in our National strategy that would change the foundational assumptions used in MCRS-16. Beginning with new integrated security constructs (ISC) in 2011, the Department began to reshape how we would fight in the future. The work continued with the Joint Staff's Operational Availability 2012 Force Planning Construct (OA-12). In this study air mobility requirements were reviewed and analyzed by OSD, the Joint Staff and the Air Force and based on reduced mobility requirements the capacity of inter-theater and intra-theater force structure could be reduced.

In each of these studies, the Department examined GCC requirements in light of the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG). The new guidance required less air mobility force structure

than had been programmed in the MCRS-16 based FY12 PB. The Department accomplished a final review during FY13 budget deliberations comparing FY12 with the proposed FY13 PB air mobility inventory to ensure the proposed force structure would meet GCC requirements. This took the form of an excursion to the previously accomplished MCRS-16. The elements of each MCRS-16 scenario that most closely resemble the new strategy were extracted and then combined to generate a new requirement based on the new DSG. All previous and future studies of air mobility requirements rely upon integrated security constructs that include supporting GCC, ensuring homeland defense, covering priority foundational activities around the globe, and accounting for JCS withholds, depot availability, and some level of formal schoolhouse activity to keep the training pipeline flowing. We advocate the need for continuing analyses focusing on strategy and the threat to air mobility aircraft that includes TS/MC missions, air refueling, intra and inter theater airlift and homeland defense. Any new analysis must also take into account the non-mobilized contingency and the wartime mobilized requirements as it relates to deploy to dwell for our Airmen.

Simply stated, with the requirements for two near simultaneous large-scale land campaigns removed from the 2012 DSG and in turn the most demanding MCRS-16 scenario no longer considered, the demand on the air mobility fleet is greatly reduced. We're not done; we continually analyze the air mobility fleet and ensure it can meet all emerging requirements. As the force provider, we will have the right amount of capability. Too little and we cannot fulfill our mission, too much and we are obligating resources that could be better spent on other priorities. To provide Global Reach for the Nation, we must continually balance modernization and readiness, force structure and our Airmen. The FY13 PB request strikes the right balance.

### **Strategic Airlift**

We look at our force structure in three general categories, the strategic airlift inventory (inter-theater), the tactical airlift inventory (intra-theater) and the air refueling inventory. Starting with strategic airlift, the FY12 Air Force Program of Record (POR) was 222 C-17s, 52 C-5Ms and 27 C-5As for a total fleet size of 301. This fleet fully met the 32.7 MTM/D requirement from MCRS-16. Previous to the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) statutory language required the Air Force to maintain a fleet of 316 strategic airlifters. The FY12 NDAA lowered this floor to 301, and we thank the committee for your support of that

effort. The Air Force will be proposing a new statutory floor of 275 for the FY13 NDAA; which if adopted would allow us to manage the fleet in the most efficient way possible.

With the additional procurement of one C-17 directed by the FY12 National Defense Appropriations Act, the FY13 PB request POR for strategic airlift is 223 C-17s and 52 C-5Ms for a total fleet size of 275. We are asking to retire 27 C-5As resulting in an savings of \$135 million in FY13. The C-5A retirements are phased, with five initially in FY13 and the remainder between FY14 and FY16. This allows for some flexibility as the C-5M fleet reaches initial operating capability which we currently project to be March 2013 and full operational capability, which we expect in 2017. The FY13 PB request continues to fund this critical modernization effort, the C-5M, at \$1.23 billion. The C-5M combines advanced avionics and the Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program (RERP), ensuring the C-5 will continue to fly for decades to come. The FY13 PB request also continues to fund the Global Reach Improvement Plan (GRIP) at \$138.2 million. The GRIP will bring our entire C-17 fleet to a common configuration, the C-17A. This common configuration includes extended range fuel tanks and the Onboard Inert Gas-Generating System (OBIGS II). With continued funding of these modernization efforts, the proposed strategic airlift fleet of 275 meets strategic airlift requirement of today and the future and results in a force structure with greater capacity than the one we owned when Operation Iraqi Freedom began. The FY13 PB request strategic airlift inventory can meet ongoing and emerging GCC requirements in both non-mobilized contingencies and full wartime mobilization.

### **Tactical Airlift**

Our tactical airlift force structure is primarily made up of C-130H/J's. We've also added the C-27J to the tactical airlift fleet specifically for TS/MC mission. It also important to mention the C-17 is routinely used in a tactical role. As the C-17 transitions from its strategic role during a contingency it can relieve the burden on the C-130 fleet. A robust C-17 fleet allows us to reduce both the C-5 and the C-130 inventories. The FY12 POR was 372 C-130 H/J's and 38 C-27J's. This satisfied the MCRS-16 requirement of 335 intra-theater tactical aircraft plus 20 C-130 H/J's dedicated along with 38 C-27J for TS/MC missions. The FY13 PB request supports a C-130 H/J fleet of 318 and divestiture of the C-27J.

The proposed fleet of 318 C-130 H/J fully meets the capability required to support the 2012 DSG. Of the 318 C-130H/J, sufficient numbers remain to meet the Army's requirement for TS/MC mission support. By retiring 39 C-130Hs in FY13 and a total of 65 C-130Hs over the FYDP, we save nearly \$500 million dollars in operations, maintenance and upgrade costs over the FYDP. The remaining fleet will consist of 134 C-130Js and 184 C-130Hs, assuming the procurement of 29 additional C-130Js over the FYDP. The FY13 PB request terminates the C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP). We are looking at less costly solutions that will ensure peace time airspace access for the C-130H fleet to begin in FY14. The cancelation of C-130 AMP will result in a \$2.6 billion savings over the FYDP.

### **Time Sensitive/Mission Critical Direct Support**

The Air Force honors its promise to support the Army's need for TS/MC operations. But the mission should not be tied to a specific type of aircraft and the 2010 RAND report concluded that both the C-130 and C-27J can perform the full spectrum of TS/MC missions. Going forward, we will fulfill this requirement with the C-130. We are unable to afford niche capabilities, and the C-27J falls into that category with limited payload capacity and range. We know we can accomplish the TS/MC mission with the C-130s: our very first direct support test was accomplished using two C-130 aircraft. Currently in Afghanistan the mission is being accomplished with two C-27Js and one C-130. A recently signed memorandum of understanding by both the Air Force and Army reaffirms the concept of employment for TS/MC support. The Air Force will stop delivery of the C-27J at 21 aircraft; we are currently not contractually obligated for the remaining 17 in the FY12 POR. Due to the small fleet dynamics, OSD estimated the lifecycle costs over 25 years to be greater for the C-27J than the C-130J. By divesting the C-27J fleet, we save \$1.42 billion over the FYDP. The proposed FY13 PB request tactical airlift fleet will have sufficient capacity to support the 2012 DSG.

### **Aerial Refueling**

The current air refueling fleet is comprised of up KC-135 and KC-10 aircraft. As the committee is well aware, our refueling fleet averages 47 years of age. That's one reason the KC-46A tanker remains among the Air Force's top acquisition priorities. A little more than a year ago, the Air Force awarded Boeing an engineering, manufacturing and development contract for

the KC-46. The KC-46 Program, under the superb leadership of Major General Christopher Bogdan, continues to make excellent progress toward delivering the KC-46 to our command. The KC-46A office program office has continued to work with our command, the Federal Aviation Administration and other numerous DoD stakeholders toward Preliminary Design Review. We continue to execute the program to the cost and schedule baseline we established, along with Boeing. We will deliver a new tanker, ready for war on day one. The FY13 PB request fully funds the KC-46A program.

The FY13 PB request retires 20 KC-135s leaving the overall air refueling fleet at 453 (59 KC-10s and 394 KC-135s). The MCRS-16 based requirement called for an air refueling fleet size of more than 500 aircraft during periods of peak demand. As part of the 2012 DSG review, the Department determined that a fleet of 453 tankers could meet non-mobilized contingency and wartime requirements evaluated in OA-12. Retiring 20 KC-135s in FY13 saves \$100 million over the FYDP. While we are excited about the KC-46A entering the fleet, we will continue to rely on the KC-135 to meet air refueling demands for many years to come. The FY13 PB request continues to invest in upgrades in both the KC-135 and KC-10 fleet. The KC-10 is currently beginning a communication, navigation surveillance (CNS) and air-traffic management system (ATM) upgrade that will ensure peacetime airspace access for years to come. The KC-135 continues its Block 45 avionics upgrade and 95 aircraft will be upgrading their engines for greater fuel efficiency. The FY13 PB request supports a more modern and capable air refueling fleet capable of supporting the 2012 DSG.

## **Force Structure**

During the drawdown of the 1990's the Air Force, with Congressional approval, began shifting force structure from the active duty into the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves. At the time, the shift made a great deal of sense, allowing us to maintain significant resources in reserve that might occasionally be needed at a fraction of the cost of keeping them in the active component. During the last decade of combat operations, we've been able to meet war fighter requirements through a mix of partial mobilizations and increased sustained reserve volunteerism. Let me be very clear, our reserve component has always answered our call and we are committed to sustaining their readiness alongside the active duty.

The challenge we're faced with involves our C-130 and KC-135 fleets, where 65% of our aircraft and crews reside in the reserve component. The active duty force has been operating at a 1:1 dwell to deploy ration for several years, and we expect that to continue at least through 2014. We cannot further reduce the already limited active duty force. As we reduce force structure, it appears the reserve component shares more of the burden because they simply possess more of the resources. Once the retirements and force shaping the FY13 PB request supports are complete, the reserve component will still account for 60% of these two fleets. This is the force structure needed to achieve a 1:2 deploy to dwell for our active duty and a 1:5 dwell for our reserve component Airmen. As we transition to a steady state peacetime force, we need this slight adjustment of force structure to honor the promise we've made to our Airmen and their families and still meet our daily takings around the world. This rebalancing will allow us to open three additional reserve-associate C-130 squadrons; active duty Airmen who will be co-located with existing reserve component C-130 units. We will transfer 16 C-17s from the active duty to the reserve component as we continuously look to rebalance our strategic airlift force structure, 8 C-17s in FY13 and 8 in FY15.

Our force structure adjustments reflect the combined efforts of the active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve and we are very grateful they brought so many options to the table. We recognize these force structure changes will affect many communities around the country. We humbly ask the committee consider our responsibility as stewards of the air mobility portfolio and what we want to accomplish for both our active duty and reserve component Airmen.

## **Conclusion**

As we meet here today, your mobility Airmen are delivering hope with airlift and airdrop around the world through humanitarian and combat missions. They are fueling the fight with tankers to ensure the Nation possesses long range strike options and our ground forces always receive support from above. They are saving lives with aeromedical evacuation and critical care air transport teams, giving our wounded the best chance of survival in the history of warfare. We are committed to our warfighters on the ground; it is personal for us. We will always say yes, we will always answer the call. I am confident that your air mobility fleet and force structure reflected in the FY13 PB request will fully support the 2012 DSG and continue to



provide Global Reach for the Nation. Thank you for your enduring support of our Airmen and this capability.