



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE AIR FORCE
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National Commission Hears Testimony on Air Force Decision-Making From Former Air Force Chief of Staff, Members of Congress

Washington, D.C.—The size and focus of the three Air Force components in the context of strategic needs and the current fiscal environment dominated discussion in a public hearing conducted by the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force in Arlington, Va., on July 23.

The Commissioners heard testimony as part of its congressionally mandated mission to comprehensively study the U.S. Air Force and its three components—active, reserve, and the Air National Guard—in an independent analysis of whether, and how, the Air Force's structure should be modified to best fit current and future mission requirements with available resources. The report and recommendations are due to the President and Congress on Feb. 1, 2014.

Retired General Ronald R. Fogleman, former Air Force Chief of Staff, addressed the Commission about his experience with the Air Force's successful implementation of total force policy. However, in a time of budget austerity when personnel costs are rising and expenditures on weapons and modernization is shrinking, he advocated a return to a militia model with a smaller standing force and the bulk of equipment and personnel residing in reserve components. "What we're doing today is paying for manpower and starving procurement," he told the commissioners.

He told the Commission that many policies and plans regarding use of the reserve components rely on assumptions concerning capabilities and capacities, and that "there is room for tiered readiness" among reserve forces. He encouraged the Commission to get beyond those assumptions in its analysis.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael Moeller, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Programs, updated the commission on the Air Force's strategic planning process and its own assessment of balancing missions and resources among the three components. He said the Total Force Task Force (TF2) has discovered that in determining balance, some 45 distinct mission sets must be looked at individually. He also told the commission he believes tiered readiness doesn't work for the Air Force as "we are in full usage all the time."

The seven commissioners in attendance followed with several specific questions for Lt. Gen. Moeller about TF2's early findings and the methods it was using in its assessments, prompting Commission Chair Dennis McCarthy to note that "the Commission is fully engaged."

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska appeared before the Commission to express concern over the Air Force's Fiscal Year 2013 plan to move units from Eielson AFB near Fairbanks to Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage. She questioned the methodology the Air Force used in arriving at its decision.

Similarly, U.S. Congressman Steven Palazzo, representing Mississippi's Fourth Congressional District, testified about his experience when the Air Force proposed to move a C-130J Airlift Wing to other Air Force bases. Rep. Palazzo described Air Force officials as unable to give him clear rationales for their decision, including cost assessments, and said he concluded the process lacked foresight and failed to account for economic impact, sunk capital costs, and access to unencumbered training facilities.

Written statements were also submitted to the Commission by U.S. Senators Ron Wyden of Oregon, Carl Levin of Michigan, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, and Members of Congress Tim Ryan of Ohio, Timothy Walz of Minnesota, Martha Roby of Alabama, and Kevin Cramer of North Dakota.

Representatives of two think tanks made presentations to the Commission: Mark Gunzinger, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and Russell Rumbaugh, a senior associate at the Stimson Center. They provided insights on Congress' sustained support for the Guard and reserve and gave the Commission a historical overview of the constructs used by the Department of Defense (DoD) to determine force structure. They stressed that the Commission's analysis of the Air Force structure could become a model for DoD and the other services.

Al Garver, Executive Director of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, addressed the Commission during the public comment segment of the hearing, providing a historical and personal perspective of the Guard's capabilities, especially in responding quickly to homeland defense missions, such as scrambling sorties of fighters immediately after the September 11, 2011, terrorist attacks.

The public hearing followed an all-day closed hearing on July 22 that covered classified subjects. The panel heard from Dr. David Ochmanek, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Development, who spoke on current and projected force demands on the Air Force; Brig. Gen. Martin Schweitzer, deputy director for regional operations with the Joint Staff, who addressed force management during the execution of operations plans; Maj. Gen. Timothy Ray, director of operational planning, policy and strategy with Headquarters Air Force, who discussed reserve component utilization across a wide range of scenarios; and Maj. Gen. James McLaughlin, 24th Air Force Commander, who addressed how the active, reserve and Guard forces manage their joint capabilities for cyber warfare and space operations.

In addition to holding hearings in the nation's capital, the Commission has been intent on getting outside the Capital Beltway and hear firsthand the perspectives of airmen where they serve and to meet with as many stakeholders as possible. The Commission has conducted some site visits already and has others in various stages of planning, but in view of the emerging impact to the

Total Force of Department of Defense implementation of the requirements of the Budget Control Act, sequestration and employee furloughs, the commissioners have directed staff to defer site visits to Fiscal Year 2014 where practical, employ video teleconference where feasible and reduce the number of site visits for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2013.

“The commission will continue to collaborate with all interested parties as it exerts its independence collecting information and data, as well as assessing whether and how the structure of the Air Force should be shaped,” said Executive Director Dr. James Blackwell.

For more information on the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, visit the website, <http://afcommission.whs.mil>. Send comments and inputs to Marcia Moore, Designated Federal Officer, by mail at the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, 2521 Clark Street, Suite 210, Arlington, VA 22202, by email at dfoafstrucomm@osd.mil or by phone at 703-571-7057.

- 30 -

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