



# Letter to Airmen

**Honorable Michael W. Wynne**  
**Secretary of the Air Force**

Friday, June 15, 2007

## Force Reduction Update

Probably the most difficult part of my job as your Secretary is releasing patriotic Americans from serving in our Air Force, but it is a step we nevertheless must take. One of the duties we have as Airmen is assuring future Airmen that they will be as capable and confident to accomplish the mission as we are today. We are faced with the need to ensure ongoing GWOT operations and personnel readiness across the spectrum of conflict around the world; versus the age, health, capacity and capability of our current air and space inventories as we move into an uncertain world future.

Faced with these competing demands, our options are to either let our unmatched capabilities wither or cut our manning to invest in tomorrow's warfighting capabilities. We must accept the latter - as painful as it is - if we are to remain the world's premier air, space and cyberspace force.

I know this means more of our fine Airmen will be departing our service early, and I am not happy about it. But ultimately our duty is to answer our Nation's call, and to fund our readiness requirements means we must also reduce personnel.

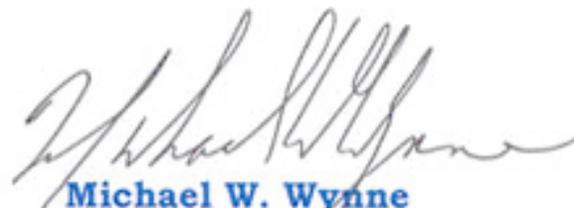
The 40,000 Active, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian Full-time Equivalent cuts highlighted in the Fiscal Year (FY) 07 President's Budget freed critical resources. We are using these funds to begin recapitalizing and modernizing our air, space and cyberspace systems to fight the GWOT, and give our future Airmen the tools to dominate all levels of warfare and across the spectrum of conflict.

We cannot continue to merely "get by" with old equipment. Our aging airplanes are increasingly expensive to operate and maintain, and many are on flight restrictions. Meanwhile, our enemies and potential challengers continually upgrade their air defenses, strike and space capabilities, and cyber attack systems.

We are continuing to pare back our force structure from the 349,000 Airmen on Active Duty at the end of FY 06, to a smaller, leaner and more capable force by FY 13. There are no plans to extend our restructuring beyond the current 40,000 reduction; in fact our drawdown is subject to change as we reap the benefits of productivity-enhancing initiatives and as we evaluate Army and Marine Corps end-strength increases. Land component growth may require our Total Force drawdown to level off, while the size of specific elements within our Air Force might actually need to grow as well.

We're also continuing Force Shaping initiatives that move the right number of Airmen into the right jobs to relieve stress in critically manned AFSCs. Rest assured, we are doing all we can to ensure the Air Force is properly shaped to optimize our contributions to the joint fight, and to ensure our Airmen are equipped to dominate air, space and cyberspace. Thank you for your service, commitment, and dedication to our Air Force and Nation during these challenging times.



  
**Michael W. Wynne**  
**Secretary of the Air Force**