

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
UNITED STATES SENATE
FISCAL YEAR 2009 READINESS POLICY AND PROGRAMS STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF: GENERAL DUNCAN J. MCNABB
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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UNITED STATES SENATE

I. Introduction

Your Air Force is engaged around the world, fighting terrorists and insurgents in the Long War. We appreciate the Senate Armed Services Committee's continued support of our air, space, and cyberspace forces as they fly and fight across the globe promoting and defending the Nation's interests. Since the Long War began, congressional supplemental funding each year, including the \$5.5 billion provided for FY08, has helped ensure that our Airmen deployed in combat overseas are trained, equipped, and ready day-to-day to perform their mission. As we prepare for the next year of global operations, the Air Force is grateful for the support the Committee provided through the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, and as always, we appreciate the great lengths to which the Committee has gone to support our Airmen, their families, and their quality of life.

In the Long War, we continue to fulfill our indispensable roles as Airmen for the Joint team working with our sister-services to enhance and capitalize on joint synergies – taking the entire team to higher levels. Simultaneously, as the Nation's sword and shield, we stand prepared to assure allies and dissuade, deter and, if necessary, defeat enemies on a global scale. For over seventeen years, the United States Air Force has been engaged in continuous combat providing the Nation and its partners unparalleled advantage in three war-fighting domains – air, space, and cyberspace. Our Airmen have maintained constant watch, deployed continuously, engaged America's adversaries directly, responded to humanitarian crises around the world, and provided the *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* to secure our Nation. The hallmark of our success has been the truly seamless manner in which our Reserve, Guard, and Regular components operate. We have leveraged our Total Force to the greatest extent ever, and

have provided the Nation with a highly cohesive team that maximizes the Air Force's overall Joint combat capability.

Our Air Force has been tested in the crucible of battle and is the most combat-proven in its history. Every day our Airmen find innovative ways to accomplish their mission more efficiently and effectively. Airmen are dedicated to the defense of this Nation. We have committed ourselves to go to the ends of the Earth, to the most dangerous or austere locations, in our Nation's hour of need or in the world's moment of despair. If tonight, tomorrow, or in twenty years from now America calls – we will go – because it is our sacred duty to provide the Nation and its Joint team, wherever it might be engaged, the full might of air, space, and cyberspace power.

To ensure success, your Air Force is organizing, training, and equipping our Airmen for both the current and future fights, building in the flexibility to operate across the entire spectrum of conflict. It is no accident that America's Air Force has unprecedented *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power*. We learned our lessons from our own history as well as from others', and we invested vast resources and effort to establish and maintain dominance in our three warfighting domains: air, space and cyberspace. Even after our victory in Operation DESERT STORM, we upgraded, modernized, and transformed our training mindset and programs. The result was a more flexible, responsive, and lethal force that contributed greatly to the Joint successes in Operations ALLIED FORCE, and saved lives in ensuing operations – from the Balkans, through tsunami-ravaged Indonesia, to Afghanistan and Iraq. Even with these advances, we continue to find innovative ways to improve the combat power we provide the Joint team. Our forces engaged in combat today are fully ready to perform their missions, but our future dominance is at risk.

We face a dangerous and uncertain future and our enemies do not sit idly by. Instead, adversaries – both declared and potential – are developing and fielding new and better means to threaten our Nation, our interests, and stability around the world. At the same time, the average age of our air and space craft continues to rise, and their ability to confront emerging threats declines. We also face increased operations, maintenance, and personnel costs that cut into our ability to finance future dominant capabilities. We are doing all we can to increase efficiency and effectiveness to defray these rising costs. Despite our best efforts, we face declining readiness and soaring re-capitalization rates. Therefore, we have taken significant steps to self-finance a massive and vital re-capitalization and modernization effort for our aging air and space force. We must ensure the Air Force is capable of setting the conditions for America’s success against emerging threats in the uncertain years that lie ahead.

With this necessity in mind, let’s examine Air Force “readiness” with respect to each of our three main priorities: *winning today’s fight, taking care of our people, and preparing for tomorrow’s challenges.*

II. Win Today’s Fight

Our first priority is to win today’s fight. Air Force Long War missions are only the latest in a string of over 17 continuous years of combat since Operation DESERT STORM began. Throughout this period, our strategic forces have remained on constant alert. In fact, the United States Air Force has underwritten the national strategy for over 60 years by providing a credible deterrent force, and we continue to serve as America’s ultimate strategic backstop, reassuring allies, dissuading competitors, and deterring adversaries by maintaining an always-ready nuclear arm. The Air Force is committed to continuously improving its ability to fulfill the Nation’s nuclear mission. As with everything we do in the Air Force, our approach to nuclear surety is

grounded on our core values of integrity, service, and excellence. We have initiated multiple levels of review of Air Force policies and procedures in order to improve the Air Force's nuclear surety. The Air Force portion of the Nation's nuclear deterrent is sound, and we will take every measure necessary to continue to provide safe, secure, reliable, nuclear forces to the American public.

Today, Air Force operations are on-going in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa (HOA). Every day, your Air Force flies approximately 250 sorties in Iraq and Afghanistan directly integrated with and enhancing ground operations. Since Long War operations began, your Air Force has flown over 80% of the coalition's combat sorties in support of OIF and OEF. These missions provide the Joint and Coalition team airlift, aero-medical evacuation, air-refueling, Command and Control, close air support to ground operations, strike, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), and electronic warfare. We have flown over 385,000 mobility sorties moving equipment and troops to and from the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). Our intra-theater airlift missions shift convoys to the air reducing the need to place troops and vehicles in harms way. Our aero-medical evacuation missions move wounded Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen to higher levels of medical care at hospitals as far away as the continental United States. In 2007, America's Airmen conducted nearly 1,600 precision strikes in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq alone, Air Force strikes increased by 171% over the previous year. Added to those numbers, your Air Force has flown over 50,000 sorties protecting the homeland for Operation NOBLE EAGLE.

Air Force engagement in CENTCOM is only the tip of the iceberg. Airmen operate around-the-clock and around-the-globe to provide all Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) with critical capabilities. Over 40% of the total force and 53% of the active duty force are directly

engaged in or supporting COCOM operations everyday. On any given day, the Air Force has approximately 206,000 Airmen (175,000 regular plus an additional 31,000 guard and reserve) fulfilling COCOM tasks. This includes approximately 127,000 Airmen conducting activities such as operating and controlling satellites, standing alert in our Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile facilities, operating unmanned aerial vehicles, launching airlift and tanker sorties, providing intelligence assessments, and many other functions critical to each of the COCOMs. There are a further 57,000 Airmen stationed OCONUS in direct support of the PACOM and EUCOM missions. Finally, a portion of the above forces plus an additional 22,000 Airman from the current AEF rotation are made available for deployments in support of other COCOM requirements. At any given time, 34,000 of these Airmen are deployed with 25,000 of them deployed to the CENTCOM AOR including approximately 6,600 fulfilling in-lieu-of (ILO) taskings. Since 2004, we have deployed approximately 30,000 Airmen to perform ILO taskings.

Impacts on Readiness

While our Airmen engaged in the Long War are trained, equipped, and ready to perform their mission, AF readiness for full spectrum operations has diminished. This is due to a high operations tempo (OPSTEMPO) that compounds the effects of aging on our inventory. Additionally, the demands of winning *Today's Fight* erode skills necessary for success against *Tomorrow's Challenges*.

The persistent nature of the Long War demands an increasing percentage of our training resources. Aircraft are deployed in greater numbers and when they are stateside, they are subject to extensive upgrades and maintenance. This impacts our ability to train and upgrade our aviators. Home station flying hours are under pressure and more of those hours are dedicated to

deployment preparation training. However, Long War missions represent a subset of the mission requirements our personnel must be prepared for.

Since 1996, readiness among the Air Force's major operational units declined nearly 39%. Additionally, the readiness of some Expeditionary Combat Support units (Civil Engineer, Communications, Intelligence, Logistics Readiness, Medical, Security Forces and Services) and Limited Supply/High Demand units (Command and Control, Rescue, ISR, and Special Operations) units has declined notably.

The high OPSTEMPO combined with an aging fleet of aircraft and spacecraft continues to impact your Air Force. We fly and maintain the oldest aircraft inventory in Air Force history. Since DESERT STORM the Air Force has flown 2.2 million hours per year on average with an inventory that numbers 31% fewer aircraft that are 42% older. The November 2007 in-flight break up of an F-15C and the subsequent grounding of our F-15 inventory is merely a symptom of the many challenges and dangers we face. Aircraft restrictions are one of the most visible results of aging, with nearly 14% of the Air Force aircraft inventory operating under some level of flight restrictions.

Our aircraft require more maintenance as they age. The number of maintenance man-hours required for each hour of flight has increased 74% over the last 17 years (FY91 to FY07) for our fighter fleet. Our legacy fighters (A-10s, F-15s, F-16s) have already flown on average 21% more hours than their original design life, with the majority of these aircraft projected to remain in service for at least 15 more years. As a result, each of our legacy fighter platforms has undergone costly repairs and structural upgrades to safely extend its service life, and still more will be required in the future. Despite these efforts, fighter aircraft availability decreased 15% over the last 17 years (FY91 to FY07).

As an example, our average F-15C/D aircraft has been in service for 25 years and has flown 66% more than its original service life of 4,000 hours. Our dedicated F-15 maintainers have fought to keep aircraft availability rates high, but at a cost. F-15s now require over 28 maintenance man-hours for each flight hour compared to only 13 man-hours 17 years ago. That's a 115% increase, paid in sweat equity, additional time away from home and family, and weekend duty by a greatly reduced labor force. This level of effort will likely increase as we continue to fly legacy fighters.

Our older fleet is also more expensive to operate and maintain. Ballooning sustainment requirements were clearly evidenced by a 24% increase in annual operational cost per flying hour over the last decade and a 40% increase in maintenance man-hours per flying hour from FY91 to FY07. Mean-time-between-maintenance-actions (a measure of aircraft reliability) also decreased, reducing the percentage of the inventory available for operations at any given time. Using a constant total active inventory formula that allows for comparative analysis, there were on average 346 less mission capable aircraft per day in FY07 as compared to FY91. Despite this decline, the equipment dimension of readiness appears to have stabilized due to increased spares funding and outstanding improvement in efficiency gained by our depots and field units. However, an OPSTEMPO increase or a funding decrease could drive readiness lower.

The Air Force has addressed aging aircraft issues by developing an overarching vision for the future state of proactive fleet management. We have chartered the Air Force Fleet Viability Board to assess the viability of our inventories so that we posture ourselves to make more informed modification, sustainment, and retirement decisions.

Despite these efforts, many of our aging platforms remain in the inventory, are past their useful life, with many unable to fly. Legislative restrictions on aircraft retirements remain an

obstacle to efficient divestiture of our oldest, least capable, and most costly to maintain aircraft. Lifting these restrictions will alleviate considerable pressure on our already constrained resources that continue to erode our overall capabilities. We appreciate the great support from the Senate Armed Services Committee in granting the AF more authority in its fleet management allowing the retirement of more KC-135Es and C-130s.

Operations over the past 17 years have also impacted personnel readiness due to the increased rate of deployments since the attacks on 9/11. However, our force is battle-tested and duty in the combat environment, alongside our Joint and Coalition partners, has led to the employment of our force in previously unimagined ways. Whether integrating our ISR with ground operations to find the enemy, precisely delivering critical supplies or personnel to our Joint partners, or increasing the number of air strikes against enemy positions, our Airmen have continued to find ways to improve the effectiveness of the Joint team.

Nevertheless, our success has created some trade-offs, especially in terms of stressed career fields impacted by a continuing high OPSTEMPO. We actively track our stressed career fields and use this data to focus on the specialties that require the most management intervention. To help mitigate stress, the Air Force is looking at skills retention bonuses, promotions, force shaping exemptions, and process improvements. We diligently watch for those career fields whose dwell ratios worsen and look for avenues to relieve this strain. We have identified over 70 career fields that have low dwell times and placed them on the “Career Fields to Watch” list. For example, our Security Forces professionals have a 1:1 dwell and are on the Air Force’s Top 5 Stressed Career Fields for officers and enlisted.

ILO taskings also stretch us in ways we could not have foreseen. Within the Joint Team, Airmen provide the Joint Force Commander distinctive skills. While complementary,

these skills are not interchangeable amongst the team, thus Airmen require ground-centric combat training to accomplish ILO taskings. This extensive out-of-core-competency training also drives down deployment-to-dwell time. Additionally, ILO taskings stress an already high personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) for many career fields such as security forces, transportation, air traffic control, civil engineering, and explosive ordnance disposal. Due to the dwell ratio nearing 1:1 for some stressed career fields, we are unable to support additional ILO taskings.

The more than 2,700 Air Reserve Component (ARC) members currently mobilized to support the Long War assist in reducing the PERSTEMPO of our Regular Component (RC). But ARC personnel equipment may be showing signs of the increased demands of the Long War. Mirroring the RC, the accumulated hours on ARC aircraft increased by Long War operations are much greater than programmed. Like the RC, Air National Guard (ANG) readiness continues to decline as we reset the force. The high OPSTEMPO of simultaneously engaging as full participants in state and federal missions drive some of the challenges. Current funding is insufficient to sustain – much less increase – readiness.

III. Take Care of our People

Developing and caring for our Airmen and their families is another Air Force priority. Airmen are our most precious resource and enable the Air Force to be a valuable contributor to the military instrument of national power. They must be well-trained and ready for expeditionary warfighting responsibilities. Spanning six decades of Air Force history, particularly over the past seventeen years, our Airmen have proven themselves as the global first responders in time of crisis – taking action anytime, anywhere. The foundations for our well-deserved reputation are the quality and frequency of the training and education we provide and our commitment to the highest possible safety and quality of life standards.

Yet increased OPSTEMPO and deployment demands have taken a toll on the way our Airmen and their families perceive quality of life. We are building strategies to maintain Air Force quality of life standards in the face of fiscal challenges. A universal theme Air Force leaders understand is “we recruit the member but we retain the family.” The quality of life we provide our Airmen and their families is a distinct determining factor in how long many of our warriors will serve. Quality of life is not something we fund with dollars that are left over from the mission. Rather, *we fund quality of life initiatives to accomplish the mission.*

We pride ourselves on maintaining high standards across the spectrum of critical support for both Airmen and their families, at Air Force installations today and expanding to Joint Base environments for the future. Our programs must continue to meet each Airman’s fundamental needs, enabling them to experience personal growth and creativity and to perform at their peak or to their potential. Knowing their families are in good hands back home allows Airmen to focus more on the mission. We continue to emphasize excellence in food service, fitness, lodging, recreation, educational opportunities, and training. We are dedicated to quality, affordability and availability in our child and youth programs and to full-spectrum individual warfighter and family readiness. Our dual challenge demands a combination of combat support and community service, and we have stepped up to provide both to our Airmen and their families.

We are diligently working to put alternative manning support in place at home station to reduce stress, and we are pressing ahead to maintain and update education and training that targets the skill sets our Airmen use when deployed. Our military families sacrifice too, and we are aware that increased OPSTEMPO affects them. We have implemented several programs to address the challenges associated with increased OPSTEMPO.

Our Airman and Family Readiness Centers provide mandatory pre-deployment briefings to all Airmen on orders to deploy, and follow up with reintegration briefings after deployments to both Airmen and their families to help make the transition back to daily home and work situations as smooth as possible. Our Extended Duty Child Care Program enables Airmen and their families to obtain quality child care when parental workloads increase due to longer duty hours and exceed the typical 50-hour per week child care arrangements. We've partnered with the Air Force Aid Society to fund our Air Force Give Parents a Break initiative, which offers eligible parents a few hours break each month from the stresses of parenting and is provided at no cost to parents experiencing unique stresses due to deployments, remote tours of duty, and extended working hours.

Complementing these AF-wide initiatives, the Air Force major commands are fielding programs to compensate for deployment challenges faced by their military families. For example, Air Mobility Command's Phoenix Spouse program provides a supportive network that informally links spouses with unit leadership and their supporting Airman and Family Readiness Center to enhance individual, family and unit readiness.

In FY07, we continued to manage and shape the force. We met short-term end strength targets while preserving the right Airmen skills for the future. In a time when fewer people are qualified to serve, the AF continues to bring in the brightest candidates possible. Despite the demands associated with increased OPSTEMPO, we have not lowered our recruiting standards. In fact, for the eighth consecutive year the AF has exceeded recruiting goals. Over 99% of our recruits have a high school diploma or better and we are extremely proud of the quality of the Airmen who join our ranks.

Despite an increased OPSTEMPO and high deployment rate, the Air Force continues to achieve acceptable retention rates across both the officer and enlisted force. For FY07, active duty Air Force officer retention finished 11% above goal, while enlisted retention fell 7% below goal. To address this shortfall, we have targeted our FY08 Selective Reenlistment Bonus program towards the mid-career year groups focusing on critical warfighting skills. The ANG met its overall officer and enlisted retention goals for FY07 and the AF Reserve fell less than 1% below its officer and 3% below its enlisted retention goal.

Our most critical war fighting skills require a special retention focus to maintain combat capability. Budgetary support for retention programs is critical to effectively manage the force and retain needed war fighting capability. These programs are judiciously and effectively targeted to provide the most return-on-investment in both dollars and capability. To that end, I would like to offer our thanks to the Senate Armed Services Committee for the broad authorities the committee has provided for special incentive pays and bonuses that ensure we can continue to recruit and retain those Airmen with the skill sets necessary for Air Force success now and in the future.

With FY 2007 Program Budget Decision (PBD) 720, the Air Force planned to reduce by 40,000 Regular AF, Guard, Reserve and civilian Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) in order to submit a balanced budget and self-finance the critical re-capitalization and modernization of our aircraft, missile and space inventories. Because our Airmen are so important, this self-financing decision was difficult, but it was our only viable re-capitalization option in the tight budgetary climate. But we are not just reducing numbers to generate investment money. We are moving and retraining Airmen to have the proper skill sets to shape the Air Force into the proper force structure.

Our force drawdown efforts will meet our PBD 720 end strength targets of 328,600 in FY08 and 316,600 in FY09. But personnel changes of this magnitude come with a degree of uncertainty and difficulty for our Airmen and their families. We are using voluntary measures to shape the force with the right skill sets, increase manning in stressed career fields, leverage new technologies, and improve our internal processes to reduce workload and reduce or eliminate unnecessary work through Air Force Smart Operations 21, or AFSO21. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure the Air Force maintains the right size and mix of forces to meet the global challenges of today and tomorrow.

The AF remains committed to the programmed FY09 PB active duty end strength level of 316,600, a figure we reached after a careful review of our force structure and continuing requirements. We continuously review our requirements and may need to increase end strength to fully support the growth of the ground forces and programmed force structure increases in CSAR-X, Predator and Global Hawk, KC-45A, Distributed Common Ground Systems, and Battlefield Airmen.

IV. Prepare for Tomorrow's Challenges

Your Air Force is working to prepare for tomorrow's challenges. We are committed to meeting the near-term needs of our Nation, while simultaneously ensuring future generations of Airmen inherit an Air Force that is relevant, capable, and sustainable.

Strategic Context

We must not confuse the present lack of large-scale, overt, state-on-state violence with an absence of serious conflict in our world. Disputed territories and resource competition are very real problems around the globe, as is the risk that these stress points could grow in the future. Ascendant powers, flush with new wealth and hungry for resources and status, are posturing

themselves to contest U.S. interests, allies, and friends. These countries are translating lessons from recent conflicts into new warfighting concepts, capabilities, and doctrines specifically designed to counter U.S. strengths and exploit vulnerabilities. Taken as a whole, these developments represent a clear effort to deny access to U.S. air, space, and cyber power, thereby drastically increasing the cost and the risk of a U.S. military response. These developments also reduce U.S. credibility and deterrent effectiveness. Those who would challenge the U.S. avoid the asymmetric advantage the Air Force provides. We neglect that advantage to our future peril.

We owe the Nation the ability to provide a full range of options, lethal and non-lethal, kinetic and non-kinetic, at the speed of sound and soon at the speed of light, any time, anywhere the Nation needs us to deliver effects across the spectrum of conflict. In order to protect the interests of the United States, we must continue to modernize our legacy systems to maintain their relevance against current and emerging threats. In addition, we must replace aging aircraft with more capable and cost-efficient platforms to strengthen the Air Force's capabilities to detect, deter, and dissuade all potential enemies. The FY09 President's Budget continues the Air Force on this flight path.

Recapitalization and Modernization

Global Vigilance: A crucial element of deterrent capability is the demonstrated ability to detect an adversary's actions and behaviors. The Air Force will continue to provide the entire Joint team with decision-quality intelligence, persistent surveillance, and timely reconnaissance in air, space, and cyberspace. Our recapitalization and modernization plan aims to dramatically increase the quantity and quality of ISR capabilities, products, and services available to the Joint Team and the Nation. Our recapitalization efforts are focused on extending the lifespans and capability sets of our workhorse platforms, such as the RC-135 Rivet Joint and several space-

based assets. We are also working to find and leverage previously untapped ISR capabilities such as those on fighters carrying targeting pods. Finally, we have made a concerted effort to ensure the viability of Air Force space communications, position, navigation and timing, early warning missions, and space situational awareness capabilities to provide uninterrupted mission continuity for America and our allies.

We must continue to develop and field systems that are both network-centric and knowledge-centric. Emerging military powers will increasingly challenge U.S. access to space, so the U.S. needs an affordable pathway to increase space situational awareness and secure space, striking the right balance among hardening, countermeasures, and reconstitution. The U.S. also needs complementary high-altitude, air-breathing systems to mitigate risks to space operations. Finally, we continue to develop new concepts that merge sensors and shooters into a seamless, ubiquitous force that can penetrate any adversary's defenses.

Global Reach: Rapid global mobility lies at the heart of U.S. strategy and no other nation has our ability to project power strategically. America's Airmen provide the long legs and lift for Joint warfighters and supply the air refueling lifeline that makes possible global strike and high endurance for global persistence and presence. The Air Force extends airlift, tanker, and aeromedical evacuation bridges that enable the deployment and employment of Joint combat power and humanitarian relief globally preserving the interests of our nation and extending a helping hand across the globe. Our mobility aircraft average a departure and arrival somewhere on the globe every 90 seconds, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Yet the increased demand for their capabilities and their decreased availability underscore the critical need for tanker and airlift recapitalization and investment to ensure the long-term viability of this vital national capability. Air refueling allows the United States to

rapidly deploy combat aircraft around the world within a matter of hours to respond to crises worldwide. The acquisition of the KC-45A will revolutionize how we conduct mobility operations much like the C-17 revolutionized our airlift operations, extending the range, payloads, and flexibility of the full range of US and coalition aircraft.

Modernizing and recapitalizing our airlift fleet is equally important for the Joint team. This critical capability reduces the need for vulnerable ground convoys to travel on dangerous roads by shifting demand from a lateral, to a vertical supply chain. By coupling modern airlift capabilities with the Joint Precision Airdrop System, we can drop supplies from high altitude, day and night, in all weather, with pinpoint accuracy to Soldiers, Marines, and Special Forces so they can maintain cover – or continue their advance – while accepting delivery on beans, blood, and bullets. This transformational capability not only takes convoys off the roads, but allows aircrews to stay above or beyond the threat of anti-aircraft weapons. Aided by our global air refueling capability, our airlift platforms also bring wounded Americans from the Air Force Field Hospital in Balad, Iraq, direct to Walter Reed, Bethesda, or Brooke Army Medical Center in less than 18 hours. That’s non-stop, same-day service, from Balad to “back home,” for America’s warriors. Doing everything we can to save the lives of Americans who have risked their lives in defense of the nation is a promise we make to everyone who serves; it’s a promise we intend to keep.

Global Power: The Air Force’s formidable combination of air, space, and cyber power is an effective deterrent that enables us to strike quickly and decisively throughout the depth and breadth of any enemy’s territory. Even as our nuclear arsenal continues to serve as the ultimate backstop of U.S. national security, we must continuously modernize our conventional air, space, and cyber power as essential, complementary deterrents.

Cyberspace in particular is emerging as a warfighting domain critical to future operations. Today, state and non-state actors exploit cyberspace to gain asymmetric advantage, and attacks through cyberspace create tactical, operational, and strategic effects at low cost and with relative impunity. In September 2007, the Air Force stood up a Cyber Command to provide combat-ready forces, trained and equipped to conduct sustained operations in and through cyberspace, that are fully integrated with air and space operations. The Air Force will continue to develop and implement plans for maturing cyber operations as one of its core competencies. Dominance in this area will contribute to freedom from attack and freedom to attack on land, and the sea, and in the air, space, and cyberspace, and will guarantee the Joint team the freedom to maneuver.

The *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* advantages the Air Force provides our Nation ensure freedom of maneuver, freedom from attack, and freedom to attack for the Joint team. However, failure to invest in sufficient quantities of modern capabilities seriously jeopardizes these advantages and risks the lives of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. Our top five acquisition priorities – the new tanker (KC-45A), new combat search and rescue helicopter (CSAR-X), space systems, F-35A, and next generation bomber – will gain and maintain militarily important advantages for our Nation for the coming decades and improve our readiness for the challenges that lie ahead.

V. Conclusion

We have learned lessons from history. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past nor can we rest on the laurels of our current dominance. The United States of America depends on air, space, and cyberspace power to an extent unprecedented in history. We are ready and engaged

today, and looking toward securing the future. Our Nation must invest today to ensure tomorrow's air, space and cyberspace dominance.

On behalf of all of our Total Force Airmen, I wish to thank the Congress and the Committee for their steadfast support of America's Air Force as we seek to defend this Nation and its interests across the globe.