

United States Air Force



Presentation

Before the House Appropriations
Committee, Subcommittee on Defense

Impacts of Sequestration and a Full-Year CR

Witness Statement of
General Mark A. Welsh III
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

February 26, 2013

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BIOGRAPHY

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GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III is Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 690,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

General Welsh was born in San Antonio, Texas. He entered the Air Force in June 1976 as a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has been assigned to numerous operational, command and staff positions. Prior to his current position, he was Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

EDUCATION

1976 Bachelor of Science degree, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

1984 Squadron Officer School, by correspondence

1986 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence

1987 Master of Science degree in computer resource management, Webster University

1988 Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

1990 Air War College, by correspondence

1993 National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

1995 Fellow, Seminar XXI, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

1998 Fellow, National Security Studies Program, Syracuse University and John Hopkins University, Syracuse, N.Y.

1999 Fellow, Ukrainian Security Studies, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

2002 The General Manager Program, Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

2009 Fellow, Pinnacle Course, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

2009 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.



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ASSIGNMENTS

1. August 1976 - July 1977, Student, undergraduate pilot training, Williams Air Force Base, Ariz.
2. July 1977- January 1981, T-37 Instructor Pilot and class commander, Williams AFB, Ariz.
3. January 1981 - May 1981, Student, fighter lead-in training, Holloman AFB, N.M.
4. May 1981 - August 1981, Student, A-10 training, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
5. August 1981 - May 1984, Instructor pilot, Flight Commander and wing standardization and evaluation Flight Examiner, 78th Tactical Fighter Squadron and 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, Royal Air Force Woodbridge, England
6. May 1984 - June 1987, Commander, Cadet Squadron 5, later, executive officer to the Commandant of Cadets, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
7. June 1987 - June 1988, Student, Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
8. June 1988 - October 1988, Student, F-16 conversion training, Luke AFB, Ariz.
9. October 1988 - July 1992, Operations Officer, 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron, later, Commander, 4th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah
10. July 1992 - June 1993, Student, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
11. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
12. June 1995 - April 1997, Commander, 347th Operations Group, Moody AFB, Ga.
13. April 1997 - June 1998, Commander, 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea
14. June 1998 - June 1999, Commander, College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
15. June 1999 - September 2001, Commandant of Cadets and Commander, 34th Training Wing, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
16. September 2001 - April 2003, Director of Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
17. April 2003 - June 2005, Director of Global Power Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
18. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.
19. July 2007 - August 2008, Vice Commander, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas
20. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for Military Support/Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C.
21. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base, Germany; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
22. August 2012 - present, Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as a lieutenant colonel and a colonel
2. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C., as a major general
3. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., as a major general and a lieutenant general
4. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as a general

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Command pilot

Flight hours: More than 3,300

Aircraft flown: F-16, A-10, T-37 and TG-7A

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MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster
Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with oak leaf cluster
Aerial Achievement Medal
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air Force Commendation Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant June 2, 1976
First Lieutenant June 2, 1978
Captain June 2, 1980
Major May 1, 1985
Lieutenant Colonel June 1, 1989
Colonel Feb. 1, 1994
Brigadier General Aug. 1, 2000
Major General Aug. 1, 2003
Lieutenant General Dec. 9, 2008
General Dec. 13, 2010

(Current as of August 2012)

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America's Air Force strives daily to be *The World's Greatest Air Force—Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation*. However, the threat of sequestration continues to overshadow that vision, as well as the Department of Defense's efforts to organize, train, equip, and employ America's armed forces in the defense of our Nation, her allies, and her ideals. Designed as a forcing function to spur meaningful fiscal solutions for our country, sequestration has instead exerted incredible short- and long-term planning disruptions upon the military Services. It now threatens to carve crucial capability from America's military without thoughtful consideration of changes in the strategic environment, our Nation's defense strategy, or the conscious assumption of risk in the military instrument of national power.

For the United States Air Force, the effects of sequestration equate to a potential \$12.4 billion topline budget reduction, affecting every non-exempt account and program. Coupled with a potential year-long continuing resolution and an estimated \$1.8 billion shortfall in overseas contingency operations funding due to higher than anticipated costs in theater, reductions of this magnitude have already driven disruptive actions in the near-term, and promise devastating impacts over the long-term.

We face three separate, but interrelated budget mechanisms next month that taken together jeopardize the Air Force's ability to fulfill its role in the Nation's current defense strategy. The sequestration order that may be issued on March 1, 2013, along with a second sequestration due to a breach in the fiscal year 2013 discretionary caps scheduled for March 27, together with the budget shortfall in operating accounts to support overseas contingency operations and a protracted continuing resolution, all combine to render us unable to continue our current and expected level of operations. If these budgetary limitations occur, they will significantly disrupt the Air Force civilian workforce, undermine the Air Force's readiness and responsiveness, and delay necessary infrastructure improvements today, while also—by hobbling modernization efforts—mortgage the Air Force's future health for years to come.

People

As the current fiscal year approaches the halfway mark and the issue of FY13 funding remains unresolved, the Air Force and the other military Services have instituted many near-term cost-saving actions to provide as much fiscal flexibility as possible in the coming months. As directed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Carter's January 10, 2013, guidance memorandum "Handling Budgetary Uncertainty in FY13," these actions attempt to minimize adverse effects on Airmen and their families, protect unit readiness, and are to some degree "reversible" if the budgetary environment stabilizes. Nonetheless, these significant near-term actions have already induced turbulence into daily operations, future planning, and the lives of Airmen and their families.

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The Air Force implemented a civilian hiring freeze, effective January 16, 2013. This practice drives capability gaps across the force and slows the Air Force's ability to provide trained civilian Airmen to manage the nuclear enterprise, sustain investments in the intelligence community, and maintain and operate our joint and Air Force bases. In a typical month, we experience a net gain of 77 civilians to perform these types of functions through normal external hiring processes.¹ The Air Force is also releasing temporary employees and not renewing the appointments of term employees unless their positions are deemed mission critical. This will impact up to 990 temporary employees, 2,160 term employees, and 260 re-employed annuitants who were specifically re-hired from retirement status for their expertise to perform specialized tasks. These releases also generate mission gaps, requiring the use of military personnel to cover the workload of the civilian positions vacated.

Longer term, should sequestration occur, the Air Force expects to furlough up to 180,000 civilian Airmen involuntarily. Although the Department of Defense has not yet issued specific guidance, we anticipate the loss of 22 working days for each civilian Airman between mid-April and September 30, 2013. The operational impacts will be particularly severe in those parts of the Air Force that rely most heavily on civilians, like our depots, the space and cyber workforce, and some of our flying training bases.² For example, at Laughlin AFB, Texas, the Air Force's largest pilot producer in fiscal year 2012,³ civilian Airmen comprise the entire maintenance and simulator instructor workforce. A twenty percent reduction in that base's ability to maintain jets and train student pilots will slow vital pilot production, an issue that always requires careful management. In terms of Airmen and family support, 70 percent of existing sexual assault response coordinators (SARCs) and 84 percent of installation victim advocates (VAs) are currently civilians. A prolonged civilian hiring freeze and the prospect of lengthy furloughs will likely disrupt and delay the Air Force's current positive trajectory to ensure at least one SARC and one VA at every installation by October 1, 2013, as directed by the fiscal year 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sequestration will also adversely impact civilians in the Air Force Reserve component. The Air Force Reserve civilian workforce, including dual-status Air Reserve Technicians, constitutes over 80 percent of the full-time support personnel responsible for daily operations in the Reserve component. Although the dual-status nature of their positions may afford some latitude regarding the expected civilian furloughs across the Department of Defense, we expect mission capability gaps nonetheless. Similarly, and although only the state Adjutants General can direct the furlough of Title 32 Air National Guard dual-status technicians, we expect states

¹ For example, the Air Force may hire 1,500 civilians external to the Service a particular month, while also seeing 1,423 departures, retirements, etc.

² Air Force depots employ approximately 24,000 civilian Airmen. 50 percent of the Air Force space and 40 percent of the Air Force cyber workforces are comprised of government or contracted civilian Airmen.

³ 358 Laughlin AFB undergraduate pilot training graduates in FY12

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may find National Guard civilian technician furloughs necessary to function within reduced civilian pay budgets.

The potential for civilian furloughs goes far beyond the 31.5 million man-hours of productivity we will lose—it also hits each individual with a 20 percent loss in pay over a nearly six-month period, and it breaks faith with an integral and vital element of the Air Force family.

Readiness

Decreasing force structure and high operations tempo since 2001 have combined to increase stress on all the Services, and Air Force readiness levels have declined steadily since 2003. We have already been forced to put full-spectrum training on the back-burner to support the current fight, and now the arbitrary nature of sequestration threatens to put us even further into a readiness deficit. The Air Force's global range, speed, flexibility, and precise striking power are what make it one of America's premier asymmetric advantages. That strategic agility and responsiveness require a high state of readiness across the Total Force to meet the requirements of the Defense Strategic Guidance—the Air Force cannot execute the defense strategy from a tiered-readiness posture. Continuing to sacrifice Air Force readiness jeopardizes the many strategic advantages of airpower, and as the Service chief charged with strengthening and advising on America's Air Force, I cannot stress strongly enough the devastating effects of remaining on that path.

In order to plan prudently for possible sequestration and a full-year continuing resolution, we have already reduced funding allocations for our Major commands by approximately 10 percent on an annual basis for fiscal year 2013, or approximately 22 percent of their remaining funds. All flying not directly related to readiness is being reviewed for necessity, while also weighing the international partnership impacts of withdrawing from high-profile events. Supply purchases are limited to essential fiscal year 2013 consumption only, which will drive a bow-wave of maintenance supply requirements beyond the fiscal year as long-term needs remain unordered. This practice will most affect operations at remote locales, where supply chain delays exert the greatest impact when vital parts are not available on-station. The commands are also de-scoping or incrementally funding contracts for fiscal year 2013 only, particularly in the areas with the most flexibility, such as construction, facility support, information technology, and knowledge-based services. Unfortunately, these are also the areas where small business contracts typically thrive, and we anticipate a significant hit to our small business prime contractor base beyond the three percent decline we have already seen since the beginning of fiscal year 2013.

Commanders across the Air Force major commands have already cancelled staff assistance visits, inspections, conferences, symposia, and training seminars not deemed mission critical. Some of these cancellations translate into increased operational risk that will compound over time as units delay much-needed compliance inspections, while others will drive

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non-support of some combatant command-directed activities such as providing maritime monitoring for counterdrug detection and interdiction for U.S. Southern Command. Other travel cancellations delay required certifications for specialized career fields like firefighters and explosive ordnance disposal specialists. A \$53 million reduction in specialized training of this type could postpone the promotions of over 8,000 Airmen, and reduces the number of certified personnel in those career fields to critical levels.

Should sequestration occur, the AF will lose 203,000 flying hours over the remainder of the fiscal year, the consequence of an 18 percent reduction of the fiscal year's total budget, or about 30 percent of remaining funds. Because the Air Force must prioritize and continue to fly operational flights in support of ongoing named operations, nuclear preparedness, presidential support, and initial qualification training pipelines, many of the flight hours that must be eliminated will come from other combatant commander requirements such as theater security cooperation packages and continuous bomber presence missions in the Pacific, joint and coalition exercises,⁴ and the cancellation of important advanced tactical training such as the Weapons Instructor Course. Beyond the readiness impacts of the flying hour reduction, relationships and continued interoperability training with many key partners and allies around the world will also be adversely affected.

The remainder of the lost flight hours, those most vital to aircrew proficiency and currency, will come from the training side of the equation. Those combat air force units not expected to deploy—the majority of fighter and bomber units—will only continue to fly until unit-level depletion of their flying hour funds, which could occur as early as mid-May 2013. Mobility air forces will experience training degradations in airdrop and air refueling, affecting both joint and international partners, with unit operations and maintenance funds potentially running out in July 2013. The U.S. Army could see the loss of over 21,000 airdrop training jumps, and airlift support to interagency and congressional senior leader travel would drop to the absolute minimum.

Unit stand downs produce severe, rapid, and long-term unit combat readiness degradation. Within 60 days of a stand down, affected units would be unable to meet emergent or operations plans requirements. Lost currency training would require six months to a year—starting from October 1, 2013—to return to current sub-optimal levels, with desired flying proficiency for crewmembers requiring even longer. This restoration would require additional funding beyond expected fiscal year 2014 levels, necessitating further cuts in other areas.

The Air Force pilot training pipeline is particularly sensitive to these types of disruptions. On April 1, 2013, Air Education and Training Command will curtail advanced flight training

⁴Joint and international exercises like COPE TIGER, RED FLAG, GREEN FLAG, TALISMAN SABER, COMMANDO SLING, COPE WEST, and NORTHERN EDGE would likely be cancelled.

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courses,⁵ freeing up resources necessary to protect initial qualification flight training. Despite those actions, initial qualification flight training⁶ may also stand down in late August or early September 2013, depending upon the impact of civilian Airmen furloughs. The cascading effects of stoppages like these could result in future pilot shortages that could take over a decade to remedy.

Sequestration will also affect weapons system sustainment by deferring 30 percent of the remaining depot maintenance in the current fiscal year, representing about 18 percent of the fiscal year's total effort. These depot delays affect over 30 aircraft types and weapons systems across the Total Force and will require the grounding of some of the affected aircraft.⁷ The deferrals equate to a 33 percent depot workload reduction, resulting in idled production shops, a degradation of workforce proficiency and productivity, and corresponding future volatility and operational costs. Full restoration of depot workforce productivity and proficiency can take two-to-three years to recover. Most importantly, all of this deferred maintenance simply slides all future work to the right, further delaying functional, safe equipment to the warfighter. Full recovery from this kind of depot pipeline disruption could take longer than five years.

In our space portfolio, sequestration will force the elimination of some system redundancies as well as other preventative maintenance actions designed to minimize risk. Some radar sites⁸ will only operate eight hours per day rather than the standard 24 hours, removing valuable missile warning and space surveillance tracking redundancy across the entire system. The reduced capacity will also limit our ability to track the smallest of near-earth orbit debris during the affected periods. The Defense Satellite Communications System would also see sustainment reductions of 75 percent, placing that system in a "fly-to-fail" mode that will likely shorten the on-orbit life span of these older generation satellites, with corresponding potential global military communications disruptions. All of these longer-term impacts from sequestration negatively affect Air Force full spectrum readiness at a time when we have been striving to reverse a ten-year declining trend in this critical area.

⁵ Such as pilot requalification, instructor upgrade, and aircraft commander upgrade courses

⁶ Such as undergraduate pilot training, introduction to fighter fundamentals, and navigator/combat systems officer courses

⁷ Sequestration will induce 146 depot delays, including 118 from the Air National Guard, affecting over 30 aircraft types and weapons systems, including the C-17, C-130, F-15, F-16, KC-135, B-52, A-10, HH-60, RC-135, U-2, and E-8 JSTARS. 85 engines will also be pulled from service, including 65 engines from the Air National Guard.

⁸ Cavalier AFS, Eareckson AFB, and nine Air Force Space Surveillance System sites across the U.S.

Infrastructure

To plan for the possibility of sequestration and a year-long continuing resolution, the Air Force has already deferred all non-emergency facility sustainment, restoration, and modernization projects across its installations, amounting to a 50 percent reduction in annual spending in this area, or a 90 percent reduction in planned spending for the remainder of the fiscal year. These delays affect dozens of restoration, modernization, sustainment, and demolition projects at dozens of installations nation-wide and overseas, including six airfield-specific projects such as runway or taxiway repair. Dormitory upgrade and repair projects are also delayed, as are many energy-saving initiatives at multiple installations.⁹ Although these near-term facility actions are technically “reversible,” they also magnify already-verified infrastructure risks, invite more costly repairs once conducted in the future, and bring economic hardship upon the civilian workforce in the affected communities.

Some of these deferments elevate operational risk by interrupting runway or nuclear enterprise sustainment, while others require us to maintain unneeded and energy-inefficient infrastructure—all will require additional future funding to rectify. Deferred repair generally costs 15-30 times more than the expense of timely and preventive maintenance, and the necessity to retain unneeded infrastructure can add up to \$4 million per year in avoidable costs. Relative to the nuclear enterprise, pushing off identified infrastructure improvements will also elevate risk to Intercontinental Ballistic Missile payload transporters and transporter erectors due to failing pavements and inadequate fire detection and suppression systems. Missile silos will remain overly-vulnerable to water intrusion, and weapons storage areas will continue to function with antiquated security systems. Delayed infrastructure improvements like these only worsen should we continue to operate under a continuing resolution—20 military construction projects totaling \$357 million scheduled for fiscal year 2013 will not begin, including F-35 beddown actions, MQ-9 maintenance hangar and flight simulator construction, and upgrades to dormitories and sanitation systems.

Modernization

If the Air Force executes all of its current, near-term actions already initiated in anticipation of sequestration for the remainder of the fiscal year, we will generate spending reductions of about \$2.9 billion of the total anticipated reductions required by sequester. Longer-term actions we expect to implement should sequestration occur will achieve an additional \$3.4 billion of the projected reductions, driving the remaining costs into Air Force

⁹ 93 restoration and modernization projects at 52 installations nation-wide and overseas, 14 sustainment projects at 12 installations, and 82 demolition efforts across 39 locations have been delayed. Twelve dormitory upgrade and repair projects affecting 1,195 dorm rooms for Airmen at nine installations are also delayed, as are 220 energy focus fund projects at 70 installations, as well as some installation moves toward utility privatization and automated metering.

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modernization and investment accounts, effectively mortgaging our future health to pay today's avoidable bills.

These sequestration cuts to Air Force modernization investments, if applied at the program, project, and activity level as planned, impact every one of the Air Force's investment programs. Coupled with a year-long continuing resolution, sequestration disrupts weapons system program strategies, cost, and schedules, creating significant impact across the Future Years Defense Program. For example, the F-35A low rate initial production would see reductions of at least two aircraft from the requested 19 in fiscal year 2013. Such potential reductions not only drive up unit costs—resulting in fiscal year 2014 production funding shortfalls—they also delay follow-on software and flight testing. Test and evaluation delays could increase total test costs across all programs, and delay delivery of critical capability to U.S. servicemen and women in the field, as well as to international partners. F-35A production reductions could also discourage partner nations from continuing in the program should they be unable to tolerate additional costs or delivery delays.

Under the continuing resolution, our innovative acquisition strategy for complex space systems—efficient space procurement—is also at risk by jeopardizing cost efficiencies. For example, an estimated \$1 billion in savings within this strategy for the Space Based Infrared Radar System would be lost, with no funds budgeted in the out years to recover the program. The KC-46 contract may require re-negotiation in a sole-source environment, which would unquestionably insert additional expense and delay into the carefully-crafted program. Without “new start” authority, the MQ-9 remotely-piloted aircraft would experience a year delay to planned kinetic and encrypted datalink communications upgrades. The C-band radar delivery to Australia would experience a similar delay, prolonging an identified gap in the southern hemisphere to detect, track, identify, and characterize potential threats in the space domain. The CV-22 multi-year program would also be delayed, with the entire contract voided on July 1, 2013 should we not receive the necessary appropriations authority to award the contract.

Each of these long-term investment account disruptions negate thousands of man-hours spent on planning, implementing, and managing complex programs intended to best balance the efficiency of taxpayer dollar expenditure with the effectiveness of capability creation. Inflicting a sledgehammer blow to the planned execution of these programs through the combined effects of the March 1 sequestration and a year-long continuing resolution disrupts that precious balance, and jeopardizes many programs that will feature prominently in the Nation's re-balance to the Asia-Pacific theater. Over time, more taxpayer dollars will be spent to address the contract re-structures and program inefficiencies caused by sequestration. Further delivery delays of validated capabilities infused with perishable technologies will only accelerate the erosion of our already-shrinking asymmetric advantage.

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Considerations for the Future

None of the actions the Air Force has taken in anticipation of sequestration have been easy, but the actions that will be necessary should it occur would be devastating. The combined effects of sequestration and a year-long continuing resolution will generate substantial risk throughout Air Force personnel, readiness, infrastructure, and modernization programs, severely restricting the Air Force's ability to fulfill its role within the current Defense Strategic Guidance. Although we will make every effort to minimize the impact of any and all budgetary constraints, sequestration—in any form—will generate painful, palpable, and ultimately pricey disruptions to each of these areas. Additionally, to better position the Air Force to meet the many challenges of providing the effective airpower America expects, further base re-alignment and closure authority would generate significant infrastructure savings that might alleviate risk assumed in other areas.

At a time when the Air Force is long-overdue for vital reconstitution following two decades of war, our inventory relies upon aging aircraft, and our force is at its smallest since its inception. Sequestration forces us into the untenable trade space of accepting further risk to our Nation's defense by sacrificing elements of the four keys to the effective provision of airpower—Airmen, readiness, infrastructure, and modernization. Additionally, the absence of a fiscal year 2013 appropriations bill thrusts each military Service into a planning purgatory of sorts, clouding near- and long-term fiscal programming with a fog of ambiguity, placing dozens of acquisition programs at risk. These implications are above and beyond those of sequestration, and further complicate an already overly-complex budgetary environment.

I am reminded of times like March 2011 when America's Air Force conducted simultaneous combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, homeland defense missions in America's skies, airlift missions in support of presidential diplomatic efforts in South America, short-notice and significant humanitarian aid to tsunami-ravaged Japan, all while providing 99 percent of operational airlift, 79 percent of in-flight refueling, 50 percent of airborne reconnaissance, and 40 percent of strike missions in support of a United Nations-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya. The adverse impact to Air Force readiness should sequestration occur will make executing multiple concurrent operations like these extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible. History shows these kinds of demands for America's military will continue—it is my job to make sure the Air Force is ready.

I urge Congress to do all that is necessary to avert the arbitrary cuts of sequestration and to pass an appropriations measure for the current fiscal year. We owe it to America's sons and daughters, who put their lives on the line whenever and wherever their Nation asks, to care for their families, provide them sufficient training, and equip them to a position of advantage over all potential adversaries.