

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
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UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE PERSONNEL OVERVIEW

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Airmen who serve in the world's most respected air, space and cyberspace force. Our Airmen have been continuously deployed and globally engaged in combat missions for over seventeen straight years—since the first F-15 touched down in Saudi Arabia in August 1990. Today, Airmen are fully engaged in the interdependent joint fight and stand prepared for rapid response and conflict across the globe as our nation's sword and shield.

Our priorities are clear: winning today's fight; developing and caring for our Airmen and their families; preparing for tomorrow's challenges. Today's confluence of global trends already foreshadows significant challenges to our organization, systems, concepts, and doctrine. We are at an historic turning point demanding and equally comprehensive revolution. The future strategic environment will be shaped by the interaction of globalization, economic disparities and competition for resources; diffusion of technology and information networks whose very nature allows unprecedented ability to harm, and potentially, paralyze advanced nations; and systemic upheavals impacting state and non-state actors, and thereby, international institutions and the world order.

Due to increased operations, maintenance, and personnel costs, we have been forced to self-finance the centerpiece of future dominance—a massive and critical recapitalization and modernization effort for our aging air and space force. Budgetary pressures forced difficult choices to ensure that the Air Force would maintain the right balance across our personnel, infrastructure, readiness and investment portfolios.

The Air Force undertook significant personnel reductions to generate billions of dollars to reprogram towards recapitalizing and modernizing essential air, space, and cyber systems, congruent with our three key mission priorities. The impact on our warfighting Airmen has been significant. We have been compelled to make some very difficult choices with respect to our people. Fewer platforms that require fewer operators and maintainers are part of the equation. We are taking a hard look at all our processes and streamlining our organizations. At the same time, we want to improve the training and professional development of our Airmen.

However, maintaining a Required Force of 86 modern Combat Wings will also be significantly impacted by current programmed reductions in Air Force end strength. The Air Force has submitted a report to Congressional defense committees on Total Force end strength requirements due to new and emerging missions. This report identifies our Total Force end strength requirement of 681.9K in FY 09 growing to 688.5K by FY 15 to operate, maintain, and support a Required Force of 86 modern Combat Wings and how the AF will fund these requirements.

Force Shaping

We are working to tailor our personnel mix to the new security environment by using a variety of force shaping tools across the personnel inventory. In FY07 we used a variety of voluntary and involuntary initiatives to reduce our endstrength in very specific areas. We deliberately took greater risk in the home-station and support career fields to minimize risk in the combat arena. We are pleased with the results of our FY07 Force Shaping efforts. However, we will not be looking for any significant force reductions beyond normal separation and retirements in FY08. We intend for FY08 to be a “strategic pause” as we evaluate the effects of our force shaping efforts on the field. This is the time for people and organizations to “settle” and we will

use the feedback from the field to make any necessary course corrections in FY09. The FY08 Force Shaping program has been structured to achieve approximately 650 officer separations and retirements over and above normal attrition. The program will offer Voluntary Separation Pay; Limited Active Duty Service Commitment waivers; Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel Time in Grade waivers for retirement; Officer eight-year Total Active Federal Commissioned Service retirement (vice the normal 10 year requirement); and continuation of the officer and enlisted Blue to Green Interservice Transfer program. We have cancelled the FY08 Force Shaping Board because we are confident we will meet our endstrength without needing to involuntarily reduce our officer corps. There are currently no enlisted Force Shaping programs in FY08 except for the voluntary Blue to Green Interservice Transfer program.

Personnel Services Delivery

To achieve the Secretary of Defense's objective to shift resources "from bureaucracy to battlefield," we are overhauling Air Force personnel services. Our Total Force (Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and Civilian) Personnel Services Delivery initiative modernizes the processes, organizations and technologies through which the Air Force supports our Airmen and their commanders.

Our goal is to deliver higher-quality personnel services with greater access, speed, accuracy, reliability and efficiency. The Air Force plans to program the resulting manpower savings to other compelling needs over the next six years. This initiative enhances our ability to acquire, train, educate, deliver, employ and empower Airmen with the needed skills, knowledge and experience to accomplish Air Force missions.

Our front line Airmen at base-level are key. They are the experts on the day-to-day workings of the Air Force. Just a few months ago, our base-level Airmen at Grand Forks AFB

presented us a technological innovation. It's a locally developed software application that brings mass quantities of Personnel data right to each commander in a consolidated, meaningful "dashboard" of information. All of this happens with minimal intervention of the Personnel "middleman" thereby freeing the Personnelists up to work on other tasks. We are very excited by this homegrown "Base-Level Service delivery Model" and are actively working to incorporate it across the Air Force in FY08. We will let the bases incorporate it into their programs and procedures and see how we can adapt it to different organizations and environments. We plan to adapt it continually and make improvements as we get inputs from the field.

National Security Personnel System (NSPS)

Our civilian workforce is undergoing a significant transformation with implementation of the DoD National Security Personnel System. NSPS is a simplified, more flexible civilian personnel management system that improves the way we hire, assign, compensate, and reward our civilian employees. This modern management system enhances the Air Force's responsiveness to the national security environment, preserves employee protections and benefits, and maintains the core values of the civil service.

NSPS design and development has been a broad-based, participative process that included employees, supervisors and managers, unions, employee advocacy groups and various public interest groups. Almost 100% of eligible employees have converted to NSPS—over 39,000. NSPS is the most comprehensive new federal personnel management system in more than 50 years, and it's a key component in the DoD's achievement of a performance-based, results-oriented Total Force.

Recruiting

As we prepare for an uncertain future, we are transforming the force to ensure we are the right size and shape to meet emerging global threats with joint and battle trained Airmen. We are becoming a smaller force, with a critical need for specific skills. In order to dominate in the domains of Air, Space and Cyberspace throughout the 21st Century, we must recruit, develop, and organize America's diverse and brightest talent for the complex, multinational, and interagency operations of the future.

Our recruiting force has met their enlisted recruiting mission through persistence and dedication. Since 2000, the Air Force has enlisted 258,166 Airmen against a goal of 254,753 for 101 percent mission accomplishment. For Fiscal Year 2008, the active-duty requirement is 27,800 and 9,258 new Airman have accessed up to this point with 9,461 waiting to enter Basic Military Training. We're on track to meet our goals. To date for Fiscal Year 2008, we've accessed 100% of our active duty goal, and accessed 100% and 114% of our Reserve and Guard accession goals, respectively.

The United States Air Force Recruiting Service continues to find the right person, for the right job, at the right time and this is clearly evident in our most critical skills. Recruiting Service has filled every requirement for Combat Controller (CCT), Pararescue (PJ), Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE), Fuels systems, Security Forces, Armament Systems, Munitions Systems, Utilities and Linguists since 2001. This has been accomplished through hard work and the significant assistance of the U.S. Congress. Recruits who choose to enter these career fields are offered an Initial Enlistment Bonus (IEB) ranging from \$1.5K to \$13K, depending on the job and length of enlistment. No other enlistment bonuses are offered.

The Air Force Reserves exceeded its recruiting goals for the seventh consecutive year in FY07. However, BRAC, Total Force Initiative and PBD 720 cuts will pose significant challenges in 2008. Aggressive measures will be needed to stand up new missions at Pope, MacDill and Elmendorf AFBs. While we've benefited from active duty Force Shaping initiatives we anticipate tougher days ahead as the prior service recruiting pool will be smaller forcing us to rely more heavily on non-prior service (NPS) individuals. Competing for the NPS pool against other reserve and active duty components that may have more attractive bonus packages will add to recruiting challenges. Funding for advertising and bonuses will play a key role in meeting manning requirements.

The majority of our officer programs have also met with mission success, with the exception of medical recruiting. Last year the Air Force recruited just under half of its target for fully qualified healthcare professionals. Broken down by specialty, we recruited 68 doctors (17.4% of target), 45 dentists (25.5%), 222 nurses (62.5%), 125 biomedical scientists (62.8%), and 34 medical administrators (97%). . Currently, the Air Force's Medical, Dental and Nurse corps have significant manning challenges that are directly attributable to recruiting and retaining these personnel. These challenges are made all the greater because the Air Force has deployed over 8000 medical officers in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) since 2001. Since 9/11, Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) and Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) have been working together to implement innovative ways to address our shortfalls in medical recruiting, to include increasing the number of available health professions scholarships and developing a "Career Field Champions" network of medical professionals to assist with our recruiting effort.

Retention

In Fiscal Year 2007, we continued to manage and shape the force across and within skills. Maintaining acceptable retention levels through targeted programs continues to be critical to this effort. Force shaping ensured active duty end strength met our longer term requirements.

For FY07, active duty Air Force officer retention finished 11% above goal (excluding force shaping losses), while enlisted retention fell below goal (92.7% of goal), still within acceptable margins. The AF Reserve fell short of its enlisted retention goal by 3%, attaining 97% and was .2% shy of the officer retention goal, attaining 99.8%. The ANG met their overall officer and enlisted retention goals for FY07. Even with these successes, some enlisted specialties in the active Air Force did not achieve their overall retention goal, including Air Traffic Control, Mid East Crypto Linguist, Structural Civil Engineering, and Pavement and Construction Equipment Vehicle Operations, and Contracting.

Our most critical warfighting skills require a special focus on retention to maintain combat capability due to critical manning and the demands of increased operations tempo placed on career fields including Pararescue, Combat Control, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal. Budget support for retention programs is critical to effectively manage the force and preserve needed warfighting capability. These programs are judiciously and effectively targeted to provide the most return-on-investment in both dollars and capability.

Retention rate in the Air Force Reserves is also becoming a concern although we missed our goal in FY07 by only a slight margin (99.8%). However, this marked the second year in a row that we didn't reach our AFRES retention targets. We've seen an increase in the turnover rate via gradual decreases in First Term and Career Airmen reenlistments over the last three years with reenlistments dropping nearly 10 points. We believe this is partly due to fallout from

BRAC and PBD 720, but will monitor closely to identify opportunities to influence our Airmen's behavior as they reach key career decision points.

The Air Force's ability to retain experienced healthcare personnel past their initial commitment has declined—compounding our recruiting challenges. The retention at the 10-year point is ~ 26% for physicians, ~18% for dentists, ~34% for nurses, ~36% for biomedical sciences officers and ~52% for administrators. The Air Force continues to develop both accession and retention incentives to ensure the right mix of health professionals.

Our warfighting Airmen are committed to serving, including those experiencing high deployment rates. Combatant Commander (COCOM) requirements and the GWOT levy a high demand for pilots, navigators, intelligence, civil engineers, and security forces officers as well as enlisted Airmen in aircrew, special operations, intelligence, vehicle operators, civil engineering, and security forces. Despite an increased operations tempo and deployment rate, the Air Force continues to achieve acceptable retention levels across the officer and enlisted force.

Finally, we understand that support to families is a critical part of retention. Working together with their spouses and families, Airmen make a decision to stay in the Air Force based on many factors, one of which is the quality of life they and their families deserve. With a strategic plan that highlights the importance of “Taking Care of People”, Air Force recognizes that families are vital to retention.

Force Development

As part of our Air Force Transformation, we are reviewing and synchronizing our development efforts to realize efficiencies in how we utilize developmental tools -- educational, training or experiential -- to produce Airmen (military and civilian; officer and enlisted; active and reserve). We're dedicating resources to ensure our “most important weapon system” is

prepared to deliver Air, Space and Cyberspace power wherever and whenever it is needed.

Synchronized, deliberate development relies on a common language, a common framework and enduring processes. We are finalizing this common language and framework by publishing our Institutional Competency List and Continuum of Learning framework. Next, we must review our developmental processes to ensure they describe requirements, align programs, and link investments with outcomes. As an example, we eliminated redundancies in legacy ancillary training reducing training time to 90 minutes per Airman ultimately saving 8 hours, per year, per Airman, for a total of over 6 million AF work-hours per year.

We are synchronizing processes to meet requirements for the skills Airmen need in an expeditionary environment. Starting in 2011 we'll send select Airmen to the Common Battlefield Airman Training course to enhance the expeditionary skills they learned in Basic Military Training. We are teaching Airmen self aid and buddy care so they can take care of each other when their bases take mortar fire or when teams come under fire while performing their duties "outside the wire." We've established a Center of Excellence for Expeditionary Ground Combat to ensure our pre-deployment training is responsive to the changing tactics and techniques used by our enemies in the AOR. We are extending Basic Military Training to 8.5 weeks, to teach Airmen skills to defend an Air Base and to operate in the expeditionary environment of the 21st Century.

We established the Air Force Culture and Language Center at Maxwell AFB, AL, unique in its mission to develop expeditionary Airmen by synchronizing education and training across our Professional Military Education Schools and deployment training venues. We are teaching language training and enhancing regional studies at our Air Command and Staff College and Air War College. We've also implemented regional studies at our Senior NCO Academy, NCO

Academy, and Airmen Leadership Schools. We are consolidating Air Force Specialty codes to provide broader skill sets and enabling flexibility in GWOT and support of COCOM missions.

We have also placed a great focus on culture and language training at our officer accession sources, with the objective of developing officers with acute cultural understandings, able to forge partnerships and alliances. A majority of Air Force Academy and ROTC Cadets are enrolled in foreign language education and are now able to participate in study abroad programs, not only at foreign military academies but also local universities. One force development strategy is to target foreign language speakers, primarily focusing on AFROTC detachments that sponsor foreign language programs. Currently, we have 54 cadets enrolled as Language Majors, with another 629 scholarship cadets majoring in technical degrees and taking languages as an elective. Another 100 cadets annually participate in foreign culture and language immersions in countries of strategic importance. Beginning with cadets contracted in August of 2006, AFROTC scholarship cadets majoring in non-technical degrees must now complete 12 semester hours of foreign languages. Further, USAFA cadets who are technical majors are taking 6 semester hours in a foreign language and non-technical majors are taking 12 semester hours in a foreign language.

Caring for Airmen

I'm excited that my role as Air Force A1 enables me to be the Quality of Life champion for the Air Force. Quality of life is not merely a list of programs and services; it's the way we take care of our Airmen through those programs, and how they know we're supporting them and their families who sacrifice for America. We know Airmen focus more on their mission when they have positive ways to rejuvenate from stress, when they have the knowledge that their

families are in good hands, and when they feel good about being part of the larger Air Force team.

The Air Force is shifting a portion of funding from manpower and base operating support to address our critical recapitalization requirements. However, we understand that to maintain combat capability we must continue to balance our modernization of our weapons systems with development of Airmen who are ready, willing, and able to employ them. To that end, we are finding innovative ways to transform our community support services and programs while avoiding unnecessary impacts to services delivered. One way we are transforming is through the headquarters realignment of Air Force Services from Logistics to Manpower and Personnel. This transition opens the door to increased efficiencies and a more seamless approach to customer service. It also allows for a single point of oversight across the entire “people enterprise” and tightly linking the personnel, manpower, and services functions. We remain committed to ensure the needs of our Airmen and their families are met.

Taking care of our seriously wounded, injured or ill Airmen is a top priority. We continue to expand the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program in an effort to provide the best possible care to these brave Airmen and their families. The heart of the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program is the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) who is assigned to each patient for the duration of their need. The FLO serves as a single point of contact between the Airman and the numerous helping agencies. Our FLOs provide a critical resource to deal with the unfamiliar routine of the recovery process and prevents the Airman from being lost in the bureaucracy.

Similarly, the Air Force assigns a Community Readiness Coordinator (CRC) when a service member casualty notification is made. The CRC works closely with the FLO to ensure the combat related injured or ill service member and their family receives complete information

and entitlements. Later, if the member is not returned to active duty, we assist with federal employment, entitlements and benefits information, financial resources, family support, and more. The member is tracked monthly for five years after separation or retirement.

Our Fit to Fight program and food service operations are cornerstones of combat capability. Airmen who are well-fed and physically fit are healthier, think more clearly, handle more stress, and are better able to complete the mission despite reduced sleep and extended hours. This translates directly to increased combat capability from our most important weapon system—our people.

Child Development Programs

Child care is the #1 Quality of Life issue for our Airmen and their families. We are focused on providing quality, available and affordable child and youth development programs to Airmen and their families through an extensive system of programs and services both on and off Air Force installations. A recent national study highlighted the DoD child care program as leading the nation in quality standards and effective oversight. We recognize that readily available, quality and affordable child care and youth programs are a workforce issue with direct impact on mission readiness. We are proud of the Air Force's contribution to this program and believe our child care program is a critical factor in helping Airmen remain focused on the mission.

Airmen must balance the competing demands of parenting and military service, particularly challenging in today's environment of higher operations tempo, increased mobilization, and longer periods of time away from home. We are committed to serving these Airmen and their families by redoubling our efforts to reach out and assist all members of the total force through robust child and youth programs wherever the member resides, when they need care. Traditional

child care is provided in on-base Child Development Centers (CDCs), School Age Programs (SAPs) housed in Youth Centers, and Family Child Care (FCC) Homes. The Air Force requires that CDCs be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and school age programs be accredited by the National After-school Alliance, and the National Association of Family Child Care also offers accreditation to FCC providers. A diverse array of approaches to provide Airmen and their families with nontraditional child care are available to support our families outside of typical duty schedules, or in geographically separated areas.

The Air Force Extended Duty Child Care Program (EDC) provides 18,000 hours of extended child care each month in Family Child Care homes at no-cost to the military member. The Extended Duty Care initiative enables Airmen and their families to obtain high-quality child care from Air Force licensed or affiliated providers at or near their base when parental workloads increase due to longer duty hours and exceed their typical 50-hours per week child care arrangements. Child care is provided for non-traditional hours, such as evenings and weekends at no additional costs to parents. This initiative also helps parents with “child care emergencies” when their regular source of child care is not available, and care is provided for spouses of deployed or TDY Airmen needing child care created in part by absence of spouse. The Extended Duty Child Care program is available to Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve members.

The Air Force Returning Home Care (RHC) Program supports Airmen returning home from deployments lasting 30 or more days and for Airmen who routinely deploy on a short-term basis (cumulative of 30 days in a six-month period) in support of contingency operations. Airmen receive 16 hours of free child care upon their return to their home station and their family. The care is provided in one of the Extended Duty Family Child Care homes on base that

is currently under contract as part of an Air Force Services initiative to support Airmen required to work extended hours. The Returning Home Care Program supports post-deployment by providing child care while Airmen and spouses reconnect.

Our Airman and Family Readiness professionals are helping Airmen and their families adapt to the realities of life in an Expeditionary Air Force. They do this through personal and family readiness counseling, personal financial management, Air Force Aid assistance, spouse career planning, and transition and relocation assistance. Experts in the Equal Opportunity and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response arenas help every Airman exercise positive and productive interpersonal relationships, in both professional and personal interactions. The Air Force is a family, and our clubs and recreation programs foster and strengthen those community bonds, and promote high morale and an esprit de corps vital to all our endeavors.

I'm also excited to serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. These exchanges exist in one form or another at every installation where Soldiers, Airmen and their families need support, both at home station and in contingency or deployed environments. The Board acts on behalf of the Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Air Force in directing the operations of this \$8.7 billion per year retail operation that serves the needs of Soldiers and Airmen wherever they are stationed, providing goods and services and generating dividends to support morale, welfare, and recreation benefits. They do more than consistently provide affordable products for Soldiers and Airmen; they bring a sense of community and familiarity to the larger military family, and that carries over outside United States borders where exchanges also bring a sense of home to a deployed Soldier or Airman. Just recently, the Board approved 17 major construction and image update projects for a total of \$169 million, all in an effort to ensure the highest levels of service and quality to our Soldiers,

Airmen, and their families. Growing up in a military family, I've been a lifelong customer of both, and I'm dedicated to supporting both of them fully for our Soldiers, Airmen and their families.

Additionally, we are equally committed to ensuring that all Airmen are well trained and provided with modern, safe and efficient equipment and facilities to complete their mission. We provide life-sustaining support, such as food service and lodging, to our troops in the field and essential community programs to our Airmen and their families back home. Through innovative systems and programs and the hard work of our dedicated personnel we continue to provide critical mission capability for our commanders and vital support for our members and their families.

Conclusion

Today's Airmen are doing amazing things to execute the Air Force mission, meet Air Force commitments, and keep the Air Force on a vector for success against potential future threats in an uncertain world. We are ready and engaged today, but we must continue to invest to ensure tomorrow's air, space, and cyberspace dominance. Our aim is to improve capability while maintaining the greatest combat-ready force in the world. We will accomplish this through dedication to my five focus areas: Manage end strength efficiently to maximize capability; Recruit and retain the highest quality Airmen; Maximize Continuum of Learning throughout Airman life cycle; Continue focus on Quality of Life programs for Airmen and their families; and maximize efficiencies of business processes through evolving IT solutions.

The Air Force is often first to the fight and last to leave. We give unique options to all Joint Force commanders. The Air Force must safeguard our ability to: see anything on the face of the earth; range it; observe or hold it at risk; supply, rescue, support or destroy it; assess the

effects; and exercise global command and control of all these activities. Rising to the 21st Century challenge is not a choice. It is our responsibility to bequeath a dominant Air Force to America's joint team that will follow us in service to the Nation.

We appreciate your unfailing support to the men and women of our Air Force, and I look forward to your questions.