

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS AND

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: CURRENT READINESS OF OUR ARMED FORCES

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WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

SASC (Readiness Sub-Committee)

21 March 2002

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide you with the status of Air Force readiness. As the Air Force's Deputy Chief of Staff, Air & Space Operations, I want to thank you for your continued focus on the readiness challenges facing the men and women in our great Air Force today. We have the most respected air and space force in the world, and we are transforming our service into the new century while maintaining global readiness and warfighting capabilities to support America's National Security Strategy.

OVERALL

From the Korean Peninsula to Kabul, across every continent and over all bodies of water, Air Force civilian, Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve forces continue to execute their global missions. We had a busy year. The Air Force flew over 1,000 sorties over the former Yugoslavia, enforcing no-fly zones. In Southwest Asia, a continuous steady-force presence of more than 8,000 airmen supported Operations NORTHERN WATCH and SOUTHERN WATCH, flying 70% of all coalition sorties. The Air Force continued support in the ongoing war on drugs over the Caribbean and South America, contributing to the seizure of over 75,000 kilos of narcotics. Natural disasters in India, Central America, South America, and the United States saw Air Force personnel and equipment transporting relief supplies, providing medical support and assisting in engineering projects.

The Total Air Force Team was one of the very first to respond to the attacks of September 11th, and that response continues unabated. Both Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM have seen airmen along with our sister Services successfully providing humanitarian, combat, and support operations.

Operational demands on the Air Force before September 11th were significant. Although we reached significant milestones in terms of reducing the effects of high tempo operations, the advent of war impacted many of those gains.

Our situation is more complicated since our aircraft fleet is older and more expensive to maintain. Recapitalization of our airframes and weapons systems is a partial solution. The Air Force is hoping to upgrade our infrastructure and physical plant, which includes sustainment, restoration, modernization, transportation, support equipment, and communications systems. With the help of Congress, we have made considerable progress in addressing pay, benefits, and quality of life issues--improved investments for our people.

We are hopeful that our readiness rates bottomed out in February 2001 at 65%. Fortunately, we've improved to 71% this year. While this is a marked increase, there's more to do. Whether it's well-stocked bins, improved depot maintenance, or available state-of-the-art equipment, improvements are needed. The Air Force is pursuing improvements across all core competencies, for our equipment, organizations, and personnel. A readied force is the key to meeting the threats and challenges of the future.

AIR AND SPACE SUPERIORITY

The Air Force is investing in a range of systems encompassed in the entire Find-Fix-Track-Target-Engage-Assess (F2T2EA) kill chain. Our legacy air-to-air platforms continue to be key to this process. We continue to pursue modernization of F-15 and F-16 radars, engines, and enhanced combat capability to ensure near-term fleet maintenance and air superiority in the air-to-air combat environment. We have made advances with the Joint Helmet Mounted Sight and the AIM-9X and Aim-120 next-generation air-to-air missiles. Our greatest advantage with current systems is our robust training and exercise program and access to 41 combat ranges, essential to our airmen for effective training, equipment development, and experience building.

Several electronic warfare programs support self-defense against enemy air defense systems. For example, the Comet Pod infrared (IR) countermeasures system will provide pre-emptive protection for the A-10 against IR surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), enhancing survivability in the A-10's low-altitude close air support role. The Air Force is also addressing multiple Combat Mission Needs Statements and accelerating ramp-up for production of an IR flare, responding to today's air war threat in Afghanistan and providing protection to special operations aircraft in combat zones. The Air Force is putting much emphasis on countermeasures to protect fighters and bombers from advanced SAM threats while increasing the viability and lethality of current platforms to conduct operations in the modern radio frequency (RF) threat arena. We have numerous, much-needed enhancements on the horizon for the critical Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) mission.

The Air Force is the designated Executive Agent for Space and has begun integrating systems acquisition with operations. To aid in this, the Air Force realigned the Space and Missile Systems Center from Air Force Materiel Command to Air Force Space Command. The Air Force accomplished the first National Security Space Program Assessment and will use it to draft our first National Security Space Plan later this year.

The Spacelift Range System modernization program is replacing aging and non-supportable equipment, improving reliability and efficiency, and reducing the cost of operations at the Eastern and Western launch ranges. Coupled with the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program, the Air Force will meet the future launch demands of national security, civil, and commercial payloads.

INFORMATION SUPERIORITY

Success in achieving information superiority requires an effects-based approach, superior battlespace awareness, well integrated planning and execution, and properly trained and equipped information operations (IO) organization. These ensure our information systems are free from attack while retaining the freedom to attack an adversary's systems. In coordination with Joint Forces, the Air Force engages in the daily conduct of IO functions across the spectrum of military operations, providing security to our Air Force commanders, Joint Forces CINCs, and multinational forces.

Our operational and tactical command and control (C2) airborne platforms and ground assets are in great demand and are in various upgrade stages. Our Air and space Operations Centers (AOC), with its decentralized component Control Reporting Centers (CRC) and Theater Battle Management Core Systems (TBMCS), create a

comprehensive awareness of the battlespace so that the Joint Forces Air and Space Component Commander (JFACC) can task and execute the most complex air and space operations across the entire spectrum of conflict. During Operations NOBLE EAGLE (ONE) and ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), TBMCS was rapidly deployed to support both CENTCOM and NORAD operations centers. TBMCS will evolve into an open-ended architecture capable of interfacing with a variety of joint and coalition databases, displays, and links.

Throughout 2001, the Air Force aggressively addressed the need to standardize C2 of air and space forces. Our focus is to refine the AOC into a standardized weapon system with properly trained operators, improving its ability to meet worldwide requirements. Supporting ONE and OEF validated our strategic vision for C2 systems. We will continue to develop the AOC, keeping it on course to revolutionize the operational level of warfare.

The Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) remains our premier air battle management and wide-area surveillance platform. Several upgrade programs are necessary to address aging aircraft issues, obsolete technologies, and the proliferation of advanced adversary systems. This year, one third of the AWACS fleet completed an improved radar system upgrade, which will reach full operational capability in FY05. The next upgrade will replace 1970-vintage processors and a satellite communications access program will improve connectivity with regional and national C2 centers.

Our limited numbers of airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems are in high demand. The RC-135 Rivet Joint, U-2, Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS), and Predator and Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles

(UAVs) have proven indispensable during OEF and the expanding war on terrorism by providing real-time target data, threat warning, and battle damage assessment. The Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) will see significant upgrades to its computer systems by 2005 while recapitalization and modernization efforts promise to keep the RC-135 Rivet Joint and U-2 viable well into the 21st Century.

We are committed to the production and fielding of Global Hawk as the next generation high altitude airborne ISR platform. In the spring of 2001, Global Hawk successfully completed a deployment to Australia, supporting maritime reconnaissance and achieving the first trans-Pacific crossing. Global Hawk was also deployed in support of OEF and with advanced sensor development underway, will be able to better support the time-critical targeting mission. Demands for the older Predator UAV remain high. In FY02, the Air Force will double Predator aircraft production, accelerating to two aircraft per month, adding 40 additional aircraft to the current inventory. The Air Force will also stand up a third Predator squadron and begin weaponizing the fleet.

The Multi-Platform Radar Technology Insertion Program (MP-RTIP) will allow larger and enhanced air-to-ground surveillance capabilities on a variety of platforms, to include Global Hawk, and potentially a NATO-manned platform variant.

Achieving information superiority depends considerably on the availability of a robust worldwide communications capability. Tremendous efforts are underway to modernize Military Satellite Communications (MILSATCOM) systems to keep up with demands. The scope and speed of joint operations, including OEF, simply would not be possible without MILSATCOM systems such as the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) and the Military Strategic and Tactical Relay System (MILSTAR). The Air

Force awarded a System Development and Demonstration contract in November 2001 to design the Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF) satellite system, an eventual replacement for the MILSTAR constellation beginning in 2006.

The Air Force is combining efforts with the other services to form the joint Global Information Grid (GIG), allowing warfighters, policymakers, and support personnel access to information on demand. During OEF operations, deployable communications packages were successfully connected to the GIG to support combat operations.

GLOBAL ATTACK

The Air Force creates desired effects within hours of tasking, anywhere on the globe, including locations deep within an adversary's territory. Our B-1, B-2, and B-52 bombers provide the global rapid response, precision and standoff strike capability, 24/7 battlespace persistence, and a time-critical targeting capability. These platforms now carry the highly accurate 2000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and are being fitted to carry new standoff precision guided weapons. Future integration will see inclusion of smaller precision weapons. Until the F-22, Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), and Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) become an operational part of the inventory, the Air Force continues to rely on its legacy fighters (F-15, F-16, F-117, and A-10) to provide the air-to-air and air-to-ground capability.

Consistent with recent DOD Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) direction, the Air Force is providing for long-term sustainment of Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capabilities. Minuteman III (MMIII) ICBMs will be deployed through 2020 and supported by on-going life-extension programs, while Peacekeeper (PK) ICBMs will be retired beginning this year. As the PK system is deactivated, the Air Force intends to transfer

some warheads currently on PK to the MMIII, thereby avoiding a costly life-extension program on certain MMIII warheads.

PRECISION ENGAGEMENT

The Air Force made significant progress in developing and fielding a new generation of weapons that can attack and destroy pinpoint, hardened, and relocatable targets at night and in most weather conditions while greatly reducing the risk to operators. By rapidly adapting new technology employed under actual combat conditions in Operations ALLIED FORCE and ENDURING FREEDOM, we now have an array of precision weapons that can be employed from nearly all our combat aircraft. These programs include the Joint Standoff Weapon (JSOW), Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), and Wind Corrected Munitions Dispenser (WCMD).

From the Balkans to Kabul, combatant commanders required precision capability, not large-scale conventional operations. However, this demand reduced our large Cold War reserve munitions stockpiles. OEF requirements have depleted preferred precision munitions stockpiles. The President's budget for FY02 together with supplemental requests provided over \$1 billion to increase the industrial capacity to produce precision weapons and to procure additional weapons. The FY03 Program/budget review also added funding to ensure that this increased production would be sustained. It is unlikely that we will be forced to source assets from other Theaters, which would increase the risk to potential operations elsewhere. The Air Force is working to increase precision-guided munitions (PGM) capabilities over the next several years.

Precision strike, however, is more than simply very accurate munitions. It is also the ability to generate precise effects other than destruction. The Air Force is investing in

various non-lethal weapons, offensive information warfare capabilities, and directed energy weapons to enable our military to affect targets without having to destroy them.

RAPID GLOBAL MOBILITY

Airlift and tanker aircraft give the United States the ability to swiftly reach out and influence events around the world. OEF and ONE have again shown the utility of rapid global mobility. We witnessed the potential need to provide critical tactical lift capability for immediate response at home. Air Mobility Command is undergoing comprehensive review of the air mobility force structure as part of an on-going effort to assess airlift requirements.

The procurement of additional C-17s will ensure the Air Force's ability to support its 54.5 million-ton miles per day airlift requirement. The Air Force needs at least 180 C-17s and will award a follow-on multi-year procurement contract to reach that number. Beddown plans will be conducted by Active, Reserve, and Guard forces.

The average age of our KC-135 tankers is now over 41 years and operations and support costs are escalating due to a variety of factors. Pacer CRAG (compass, radar, and global positioning system) is a major overhaul project underway for all Air Force KC-135s, meeting the congressionally mandated requirement to install GPS in all Defense Department aircraft. The ongoing war on terrorism is further stretching the tanker fleet, motivating consideration of accelerating replacement options. The Air Force is focused on acquiring the world's newest and most capable tanker while increasing availability, fuel load, and reliability all with far lower cost.

Modernization of the C-5 and C-130 fleets is a top priority. Avionics modernization, re-engining programs, and multi-year testing will bring the fleet up to an improved

standard while determining the need for additional C-17s or alternatives. New C-130Js will replace EC-130Es, the most worn-out C-130E combat delivery aircraft, Commando Solo platforms, and several WC-130H aircraft throughout the Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve units.

Additional upgrades and improvements to counter-measure defenses, CV-22, and VIP Special Air Mission/Operational Support Airlift are also planned.

AGILE COMBAT SUPPORT

Much of the deployment strain in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM has fallen on our expeditionary combat support forces. Some high-demand support areas have exceeded their on-call capabilities in current AEF rotation cycles, as a result of our surge mode activities, which are likely to continue for some time. Some Expeditionary Combat Support career fields, particularly Security Forces, Combat Communications, and Fire Fighters, are highly stressed. Consequently, we are continuing to make gains in right-sizing deployment teams so that they are postured efficiently and effectively for expeditionary needs.

The fielding of the Integrated Deployment System at all Wings has improved the readiness of the Wing deployment process. The CSAF's Logistics Review (CLR) and ongoing logistics transformation are reengineering our logistics processes to achieve an agile, effective, and well-integrated logistics chain responsive to AEF requirements. Other initiatives within the nuclear-biological-chemical and medical units are producing meaningful results.

PEOPLE

People are the most critical component of readiness and our most vital resource. As they perform Air Force missions around the world, the demands we place on them require highly motivated, highly skilled, professional airmen. Continued positive momentum in areas of compensation, benefits, recruiting and retention ensure the investment in our people.

The Air Force has enhanced responsive force packaging and provided a more stable and predictable deployment and home station scheduling environment through implementation of the Expeditionary Air and Space Force (EAF). Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve participation has steadily increased since DESERT STORM, which has created challenges for Guardsmen and Reservists balancing civilian careers with increased military requirements. Trends show demand for air power will only increase; EAF holds promise by giving airmen predictability and stability.

The increased operations tempo resulting from OEF and ONE are also reducing necessary training opportunities for the force and are raising long-term readiness challenges. Many of our low density/high demand assets have limited flying training capacity. For example, operational demands have diminished RC-135 Rivet Joint, CSAR, and E-3 AWACS airframe, simulator, and instructor availability. The increased number of fighters and mobility assets now on alert and unavailable for continuation/readiness training could have a serious impact on long-term readiness.

Retention will continue to be a priority and a challenge. Stop Loss and the increased tempo of ONE and OEF may have a negative effect on retention--offsets are already being explored. Aggressive campaigns are being worked to "re-recruit" the force,

addressing especially Battle Managers and other critical skills. While cockpits are now fully manned, rated pilot staff manning has fallen to 51%. The USAF pilot shortage is expected to continue for at least the next eight years until the effects of the ten-year active duty service commitment for undergraduate flying training are fully realized. “Re-recruiting” efforts should also help alleviate the shortage sooner.

The Air Force Reserve exceeded Command retention goals for their enlisted airmen during FY01. Seventy-eight percent of the enlisted skills are now receiving re-enlistment bonuses. The authorization to pay officer and enlisted critical skills retention bonuses should help retain individuals in high demand by the civilian sector. The Air National Guard’s number one priority is to increase the traditional pilot force, which has held steady at 90%. Through various incentive pay programs, the Guard and Reserve continue to pursue substantial enhancements to increase retention in the aviation community as well as attracting and retaining individuals to aviation.

Today less than 10% of Air Force civilians are in their first five years of service. In the next five years, more than 40% will be eligible for optional or early retirement. In addition, downsizing over the past decade skewed the mix of civilian workforce skills, compounding the loss of corporate memory and lack of breadth and depth of experience. It’s critical to maintain the right mix of civilian skills to meet tomorrow’s challenges. Several initiatives are underway to do just that.

SUMMARY

Air Force capabilities provide America with a unique set of strengths--asymmetric advantages. However, today’s technological advantage is no guarantee of future success. Maintaining the current leadership position requires addressing aging

infrastructure, modernizing outdated weapon systems and harnessing technology to achieve our vision.

In closing, today more than 725,000 highly skilled, professional, Air Force men and women are proudly supporting freedom's cause. We appreciate all this committee has done in helping to address these critical issues and look forward to working with you in the future.