

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE RESERVE READINESS

STATEMENT OF: LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN A. BRADLEY
CHIEF OF AIR FORCE RESERVE

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Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and discuss the readiness of the Air Force Reserve.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Air Force Reserve. We remain an equal partner in the Total Air Force and an integral part of our Nation's defense. The Air Force Reserve has provided significant contributions during that time, made possible because we remain tier-one ready for the Air Force. We have frequently responded to global events within 24 hours of notification. For the last 17 of our 60 years, we have maintained a persistent presence in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. It began with Operation DESERT STORM and we have been continually engaged, never leaving the Persian Gulf. During the intervening years we again responded to the needs of the Nation after the attacks of September 11, 2001, protecting the homeland through Operation NOBLE EAGLE and supporting operations abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Air Force Reserve also supplied humanitarian relief in the wake of natural disasters both home and abroad following hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes. These efforts are possible because we have dedicated, professional, highly trained reservists volunteering to participate in these noble causes and the support of their families and employers.

The Air Force Reserve is a strong and steady Total Force partner. As operational demands continue, we face challenges that can adversely impact our readiness and overall combat capability. We are always alert to the need to stay ahead of those challenges so we remain strong partners in our country's defense.

As an unrivaled wingman, we share the same priorities as the Regular Air Force: Win Today's Fight, Take Care of Our People, and Prepare for Tomorrow's Challenges.

WIN TODAY'S FIGHT

Air Force Reserve GWOT Contributions

I am proud to say that your Air Force Reserve continues to play a vital role in support of our nation's Global War on Terror (GWOT). Side-by-side with our Air Force and Air National Guard partners, we continue to support the war effort primarily in a volunteer status.

Our Reserve mobility community stepped up with large numbers of volunteers and is providing essential support to Combatant Commanders. We currently have ninety-four C-17 and C-5 strategic airlift crews on long term active duty orders in support of the GWOT. Eighteen Reserve KC-10 crews remain on active duty orders supporting the air bridge, aerial refueling and other airlift requirements.

Our Reserve F-16s and A-10s remain engaged in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM with regularly scheduled rotations. We provide eighteen crews and twelve fighter aircraft to USCENTCOM annually for close air support missions.

With little fanfare, our Special Operations and Combat Search and Rescue units continue their support of combat operations. Although rarely receiving public recognition for their actions, our personnel are heavily engaged on the ground and in the air.

To date, sixty percent of the aeromedical evacuation sorties have been flown by Air Force Reserve crews, providing a lifeline home for the Joint warfighter. Since September 11, 2001 we have flown nearly 5,000 aeromedical evacuation sorties, safely delivering 26,769 patients: 11,030 litters, 10,955 ambulatory and 4,784 attendants. I could not be more proud of these men and women. Their selfless dedication and professionalism have saved countless lives and dramatically improved the chances of recovery for those injured in the line of duty.

Tier One Ready

We in the Air Force Reserve pride ourselves on our ability to respond to any global crisis immediately or within hours. In many cases, including our response to natural disasters, we respond immediately or within hours. The Selected Reserve is trained to the same standards as active duty Airmen for a reason. We are one Air Force engaged in the same fight. With a single level of readiness in the Selected Reserve, we are able to seamlessly operate side-by-side with the Regular Air Force and Air National Guard in the full spectrum of combat operations. As an equal partner in day-to-day combat operations, it is critical we remain ready, resourced, and relevant.

Combat Training

As part of the Total Force Integration initiatives, Air Force Reserve Officer Training School was moved to Maxwell AFB, Alabama and combined with the Regular Air Force Officer Training School. Recently the Air Force initiated several programs to incorporate additional combat training for our Airmen. For example,

officer training now teaches fundamentals of unarmed combat to their officer candidates. This is just one part of a 70-hour course of expeditionary skills training.

Basic war fighting skills will be incorporated into Basic Military Training for enlisted recruits beginning 1 October 2008. This course will be two and a half weeks longer in order to produce more lethal and adaptable Airmen with emphasis on weapons training and participation in an intense exercise that replicates the deployed environment and the challenges it presents.

The Air Force is developing other training total force opportunities such as Common Battlefield Airman Training, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape training because the battlefield continually changes shape and venue, and Airmen need to be able to react and survive in any situation.

Fiscal Year 2008 National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account

A significant reason for our relevance as a combat force is the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA). The items we purchase with NGREA are prioritized from the Airmen in the field up to the Air Force Reserve Command Headquarters and vetted through the Air Staff. The cornerstone is innovation and the foundation is capabilities-based and has been for many years. I am grateful for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account because those authorizations enable us to remain relevant to the fight. The Congress provided \$45 million in NGREA last year, with which we secured critical combat capability for our Airmen in the field.

- **C5A Airlift Defensive Systems:** Protects our aircrews and C-5A aircraft from Infrared Guided Missiles
- **C-130 Secure Line of Sight/Beyond Line of Sight capability:** Provides clear communication, interoperability and improved situational awareness for our C-130 aircrews
- **C-130 Small Arms Fire Lookout Capability:** Procures troop door with large windows for C-130 aircraft to visually scan for threats to the aircraft and aircrew
- **F-16 Upgraded Commercial Fire Control Computer:** Enables use of the helmet mounted cueing sight and software improvements for continued upgrades to the aircraft
- **LITENING POD Spiral Upgrades:** Upgrades current targeting system by providing improved visual and guidance system

This account is critical to the combat capability of the Air Force Reserve and the safety of our people. Many of the new capabilities resulted in top-of-the-line improvements that are directly tied to better Close Air Support for our Soldiers and Marines in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These capabilities save lives. There is much more we can do if we continue to receive your support.

Readiness Challenges

While we maintain sufficient combat readiness to meet our current missions, we are accepting risk in a number of critical areas. For example, Depot Purchased Equipment Maintenance (DPEM) is budgeted at 79%. This reduces aircraft availability for training and operations. We will continue to work within our budget

guidance levels to balance this risk and others while accomplishing wartime taskings.

TAKE CARE OF OUR PEOPLE

Family Support

It is a long standing belief that the Air Force recruits members but we retain families, and that statement is as true today as in the past. As we continue playing a large role in prosecuting the GWOT, our members and their families are making huge sacrifices. While the Air Force's air expeditionary force construct provides predictability for members, families and employers, we recognize the impact of the demands of operations and are committed to providing services and support to the families that support us so well. We continue to place considerable emphasis on looking for new, innovative ways to reach our Reserve families of deployed members as well as to continue to improve programs already in place. To meet their needs, our Air Force community support programs and services are there for both married and single Total Force Airmen, whether at home or deployed. New initiatives include predeployment, deployment, and post deployment Airmen and family wellness programs. Specific areas of improvement include a standardized predeployment checklist as well as mandatory, comprehensive redeployment services, post-deployment health assessment and reassessment, non-clinical counseling, and education on reunion challenges that Airmen and their families face.

In 2007, several surveys were launched to evaluate the state of our members and families. Included were the Community Action Information Board (CAIB) Community Assessment Survey, with 8,440 Reserve respondents, and the Caring

for People Airmen's Questionnaire Assessment, which noted family as one of the top concerns. We continue to provide information and referral services, assistance with financial questions and concerns, family support groups, morale calls and video telephone access, volunteer opportunities, reunion activities, letter writing kits for children, and a myriad of other services.

The commuting nature of the Air Force Reserve combined with base closures and realignments create additional challenges for reservists and their families. Unlike the Regular Air Force, many of our Reserve members do not live in the local area of their host unit. In many cases, the families are scattered over various geographical regions, making access to centralized counselors difficult. With the transformation to an operational force, mobilizations and the need for more volunteerism, we are engaged in addressing several issues that have surfaced with this target population to include adjusting to the new steady state (more deployments, less predictable intervals and tour lengths, etc.), access to affordable child care, and employment opportunities. We are pursuing solutions to these problems and will continue to until they are resolved.

Force Shaping in Fiscal Year 2009

In the 2006 and 2007 President's Budget requests, the Air Force reduced Total Force end strength by 37,000 full-time equivalents and reprogrammed active military, civilian, and reserve end strength funds into the modernization and recapitalization accounts. As a result of these actions, the Air Force Reserve reduced its end strength from 74,900 to 67,500. Additionally, BRAC and Total Force Integration initiatives impacted nearly twenty percent of our personnel, many of

whom we transitioned from operating, maintaining, and supporting legacy systems to new and emerging missions such as CYBER, Predator, Global Hawk, Falconer Air Operations Centers, and Distributed Common Ground Systems. Over the past three years the Air Force has made difficult choices in respect to its People, Readiness, Infrastructure, and Modernization and Procurement accounts. The Air Force is in the process of reevaluating its end strength requirements based on new and emerging mission types as well as Air Force support for manpower increases programmed for the Army and Marine Corps.

Recruiting and Retention

We met our recruiting goals for the last seven years thanks to our great recruiters and the many authorities and funding the Congress has provided such as increased bonus incentives, opening TRICARE Reserve Select at the lowest premium to all selected reserve members, and expanding the Montgomery G.I. Bill eligibility window from 10 to 14 years. Our retention targets are also being met. While we continue to maintain manning levels to meet mission requirements, we anticipate significant recruiting and retention challenges in the near term, and potentially the long term, due to base closures and mission realignments. BRAC directed the closure and realignment of some of our units and stood up new missions at other locations. We are not allowed to move our Reserve Airmen when we close a base or unit, as is done in the Regular Air Force. Reductions and displacement of reservists present significant recruiting and retention challenges for the Air Force Reserve.

One new mission area is the stand-up of an F-22 associate unit at Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska, and Holloman AFB in Alamogordo, New Mexico. This mission will have reservists associate with their regular component partners on the fifth generation fighter. While we are excited about the opportunity, we have had to increase the number of recruiters for officer, enlisted and Air Reserve Technician positions to overcome the obstacles of this challenging recruiting market.

We must continue to identify opportunities to attract members separating from the Regular Air Force. With a shrinking pool of prior-service Air Force members, recruitment and retention of these experienced individuals is vital to avoid the costs of training non-prior service members. For some of our most critical specialties, affiliation and retention bonuses actually provide a greater return on investment versus recruiting non-prior service Airmen. Finally, force shaping authorities and incentives should be viewed from a Total Force perspective to ensure that provisions do not discourage continued service in the Reserve components.

PREPARE FOR TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

Air Force Reserve Transformation

The Air Force Reserve is accepting an increased share in the Total Force partnership with accelerated mission growth and associations. We continue to combine with our Regular and Air National Guard partners to deliver 21st Century capabilities in Global Vigilance, Reach and Power.

The technological skills and civilian experience of Reserve Airmen are ideally suited to expanding the Nation's eye in Global Vigilance. To support Air Force

dominance in space, the 310th Space Group at Schriever AFB, CO expands to become the 310th Space Wing next month. A further example of our growth in space is the increased manpower we are adding to associate with the Regular Air Force's 8th Space Warning Squadron at Schriever AFB, and the increase of our own 9th Space Operations Squadron at the Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg AFB, CA. The Air Force Reserve also operates a Global Hawk unit and other Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance systems at Beale AFB, CA, as well as Predator units at Nellis AFB, NV. All of these reservists contribute to the Nation's ability to gain and maintain awareness anywhere in the world, to provide warning and fuse data together to route relevant information to Combatant Commanders.

To extend the arm of Global Reach, we are creating Active Associations, where the Air Force Reserve has primary responsibility for the aircraft and the Regular Air Force will augment with manpower. This will occur with our KC-135s at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC and March ARB, CA, and with our C-130s at Pope AFB, NC. The Air Force Reserve will cease operating at Selfridge ANGB, MI and move manpower to augment the regular component in a classic Associate KC-135 unit at MacDill AFB, FL. In the third associate model, an Air Reserve Component (ARC) Associate, the Air National Guard is providing manpower to augment our Reserve KC-135s at Tinker AFB, OK. Additionally, we will host an Active Associate C-130 unit at Peterson AFB, CO, as well as an ARC Associate C-130 unit at Niagara Falls, NY, the Nation's first-ever combat delivery ARC association. These units will

provide responsive military capability anywhere on the globe to rapidly supply, position, or reposition Joint Forces.

To increase Global Power projection, we are assuming new missions by associating with the regular component in the F-22 at Elmendorf AFB, AK and will soon begin standing up an F-22 association at Holloman AFB, NM. In another new mission area, we will associate in the F-15E at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. In a mission we are very familiar with, we will provide experienced instructors to train the Total Force in the A-10 at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ and extend operational experience in a classic A-10 association at Moody AFB, GA. These new and expanded missions help increase the Nation's ability to hold at risk or strike any target, anywhere in the world, and achieve swift, decisive precise effects.

Commission on the National Guard and Reserves

The Congressionally directed commission completed an extensive review of the Guard and Reserves' role as an operational force. In the report the Commission acknowledged that the Air Force Reserve has been a leader in developing the force to meet operational requirements while maintaining a significant level of strategic capability. The Commission recognized the uniqueness of each Service and acknowledged the need to develop discretionary authority that provides flexible tools for the Service Secretaries to use when meeting requirements. The Department of Defense is studying many of the recommendations and part of that review will be the impact on the budget if any of the recommendations are adopted in Fiscal Year 2009.

Closing

Mr. Chairman, I take pride in the fact that when our Nation calls on the Air Force Reserve, we are trained and ready to go to the fight. Everyday we have reservists who are training and deploying around the globe in support of our nation's defense. Our ability to respond is due to our focus on readiness. In order to maintain this readiness, we budget wisely and ensure we have the proper funding levels to support our Airmen and weapon systems.

On behalf of over 67,500 Air Force Reservists, I appreciate the support this committee provides to our readiness and combat capability. The Air Force Reserve, as with the other Services, is facing many challenges. While we maintain our heritage of providing a strategic reserve capability, today and into the future, we are your operational warfighting Reserve bringing a lethal, agile, combat hardened and ready force to Combatant Commanders in the daily execution of the long war. We are proud of the fact that we provide the world's best mutual support to the United States Air Force and our joint partners.