



4 **Critical Times for Air & Space Power**

5 One factor that distinguishes the US military from the militaries of other
6 nations is America's dominance of air and space. It is a capability provided
7 primarily by the United States Air Force. Yet even as the Air Force nears the 60th
8 anniversary of its birth as a separate and independent service, the very future of
9 that air and space dominance is uncertain. Several challenges and trends give
10 cause for concern.

11 Air Force modernization and recapitalization is urgently needed and long
12 overdue. In fact, the "acquisition holiday" of the 1990s—a period characterized by
13 lean-to-nonexistent weapon procurement—has persisted into the present day.
14 The average ages of the Air Force fighter, tanker and bomber fleets are at all-
15 time highs. Projected buys of new systems such as the F/A-22 and F-35 continue
16 to shrink. The ICBM fleet is aged, too, and needs updating.

17 Across the Air Force, dollars needed for modernization, recapitalization
18 and transformation are being squeezed by the cost of the nation's Global War on
19 Terrorism. This is happening even as the US military is becoming more and more
20 expeditionary and thus more dependent on USAF's "Global Reach/Global Power"
21 capabilities, which will require more airlift and tanker capacity.

1 Additional dollars will also be needed to help pay for relief operations in
2 connection with Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters, including repairing
3 the extensive damage done to Keesler Air Force Base. Estimates to rebuild and
4 repair Keesler's training facilities, medical center and base housing could well
5 exceed \$500 million. This will add additional pressure to an already tight Air
6 Force budget.

7 With budgets in turmoil, a newly formed Defense Acquisition Performance
8 Assessment panel is looking into the overall weapons procurement process in
9 response to Congressional concerns about program execution, cost overruns
10 and schedule delays. The panel is examining how to streamline and add clarity to
11 the procurement process, yet not create unnecessary layers of oversight. The
12 defense community will also welcome answers on how to sustain adequate long-
13 term procurement funding.

14 **Too Few Dollars**

15 Despite the high stakes in the Global War on Terrorism, this nation is
16 spending less to fight it than it did to prosecute World War II, the Korean War or
17 the Vietnam War. Also, the current practice of supplemental budgeting, which
18 does not cover the full cost that the war imposes on the force, too often leaves
19 the services searching for ways to trim spending in some key places to cover
20 shortages in others. In this scenario, Science and Technology (S&T) programs
21 are squeezed, too, as investments in future warfighting capabilities take a
22 backseat to current demands.

1 By historical standards, the burden of defense spending on the nation's
2 economy is light—about four percent of GDP. The frequent use of supplemental
3 requests is fiscally irresponsible, especially in light of the fact that the Global War
4 on Terrorism will continue for some time. The services cannot themselves fund
5 these new requirements. The choice is clear—either we make a greater
6 commitment to fighting the war or expect to achieve a less than optimal outcome.

7 When it comes to uniformed people, there is equal cause for concern.
8 USAF has an authorized active duty end strength of 359,000. For several years,
9 in order to fight the War on Terrorism more effectively, the service, with Pentagon
10 permission, stayed well above that level. In 2005, however, the service drew
11 down to the planned lower level, meaning that, though the war goes on, there will
12 be fewer active duty Airmen to fight it.

13 As Air Force manpower stabilizes at a lower level, it is also being
14 reshaped to achieve a more balanced mix of skills and experience. Combine
15 downsizing and rebalancing with the inherent uncertainty of recruiting and
16 retention, and the difficulty in maintaining adequate force levels in the future
17 increases.

18 **Personnel Challenge**

19 In addition to working through force management issues, the Air Force
20 has been dealing with a leadership challenge. The service has lost several key
21 civilian and uniformed leaders without receiving timely replacements. A number
22 of positions have gone vacant for months, as the service awaited Presidential

1 nominations and Senate confirmations. We are beginning to see progress in the
2 filling of these key leadership positions, and we urge continued focus on this
3 issue. Despite these shortfalls, the Air Force has excellent leadership and great
4 people who are performing superbly in a very challenging environment.

5 Compared to the very high operations tempo in the early months of the
6 war, the pace of Air Force activity has stabilized somewhat, though not across
7 the board. Many Airmen—deployed and Stateside—are working long hours. An
8 increased reliance on Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units has
9 caused extended call-ups in both components. As the Air Force and the
10 Department of Defense (DoD) look to implement the next round of Base
11 Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, the service must increase
12 the synergy of its components if it is to deliver its full combat capability.

13 A major Air Force success story has been the close cooperation and
14 integration of the active force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve into an
15 unparalleled warfighting capability. The Air Force needs to continue to address
16 the roles, responsibilities and synergies of all three components, with each taking
17 on emerging new missions such as intelligence, space, command and control,
18 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and cyber-warfare. Recognition of the vital
19 roles of the active force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve is necessary
20 if the Air Force is to get through the budget crisis ahead while producing
21 maximum combat power.

1 The US aerospace industry has been in a crisis of its own for some time
2 and it continues to decline. Since 2000, the industry nationally has lost more than
3 100,000 jobs. Also, the number of airframe manufacturers producing Air Force combat
4 aircraft is now down to two. Mergers and consolidation in the defense industry
5 are the result of a combination of factors, including increased costs, fewer
6 acquisition contracts, foreign competition and government policies.

7 While the number of airframe manufacturers has declined, the space
8 industry is facing the dual challenge of fierce competition and overcapacity. In the
9 air and space industries alike, it will be a challenge to find enough home-grown
10 engineers, scientists and other technically skilled workers to replace that large
11 part of an aged workforce which is rapidly nearing retirement.

12 The Air Force Association believes that, taken together, these challenges
13 could threaten the continuation of our dominance in air and space. Our Air Force
14 must have a sufficient budget, an active leadership (civilian and military), and the
15 right people, equipment, facilities and training to execute its mission. We also
16 believe we must foster a strong defense industrial base with sound federal
17 policies and sufficient defense acquisition programs.

18 **The Global War on Terrorism**

19 Today, some 2.3 million brave uniformed Americans—1.4 million on
20 active duty and another 861,000 in the Guard and Reserve—are engaged in the
21 Global War on Terrorism. They are joined by approximately 650,000 DoD
22 civilians and many additional thousands of defense industry contractors who,

1 together, conduct and support military operations on three major fronts—
2 Afghanistan, Iraq and the homeland.

3 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen will do
4 whatever we ask of them to defend the cause of freedom. Increasingly, they
5 deploy far away from home into extreme environments and face combat
6 conditions. In doing so, they put their lives on the line, sometimes making the
7 ultimate sacrifice for the nation.

8 AFA unequivocally supports the men and women of the US Armed
9 Forces who collectively perform above and beyond the call of duty. As they go
10 about performing their duties, we are mindful that the goal of defeating worldwide
11 terrorism is not solely a military effort. We call for a greater national commitment
12 in resources and public support and better integration of the political, economic,
13 and informational instruments of power in order to eliminate this threat.

14 Military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are making a difference and for
15 the better. As part of a powerful joint team, Airmen helped break the Taliban's
16 grip on Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom. Air and space power also
17 played a key role in overthrowing Saddam Hussein's corrupt regime in Operation
18 Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

19 In Afghanistan, a fledgling and democratically elected government is
20 making visible strides toward self-governance. Although major combat operations
21 have ended, the country remains a dangerous place. A significant presence of

1 US Special Forces and coalition forces, backed by air and space power, will be
2 needed for some time. These forces must assist in internal security and nation
3 building while continuing to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

4 AFA believes that we must stay focused on hunting down the remnants of
5 the Taliban and al Qaeda that helped plan and carry out the terrorist attacks of
6 9/11. It is in the US national interest that Afghanistan not revert to its former
7 status as a safe haven for international terrorists. It is also imperative that we
8 impress upon the new Afghan government that illegal drug trafficking is not in its
9 interest or ours.

10 Iraq is presently the central front of the Global War on Terrorism. Long
11 after the defeat and capture of Saddam Hussein, a violent insurgency seeks to
12 keep the country in turmoil. US and coalition forces now conduct offensive
13 operations while simultaneously reacting to roadside bombings and suicide
14 attacks. Insurgents have targeted military and non-military personnel, including
15 Iraqi citizens, most of whom are committed to pursuing democracy and rebuilding
16 the country. The continuing violence has slowed reconstruction and taken a toll
17 on US forces.

18 Two-and-a-half years into the war, the United States has suffered the loss
19 of more than 1,900 service members killed, plus more than 14,000 wounded,
20 many very seriously. While victory in Iraq will not be easy or cheap, it is
21 imperative that the United States and its coalition partners see this fight through
22 to victory so that these sacrifices will not have been in vain.

1 The insurgency in Iraq is complex and constantly changing. When US
2 forces attack, the enemy disperses, adapts and reconstitutes its forces to exploit
3 new tactics. The enemy also has many identities—sometimes foreign jihadis, at
4 other times Sunni/Baathist factions, Shiite extremists or Iraqi nationalists
5 opposed to the presence of foreign forces.

6 **Airmen and Counterinsurgency**

7 Whatever the situation on the ground in Iraq, a joint force of approximately
8 135,000 US military personnel continues to adapt and fight well. Each enemy
9 threat requires a response of precise and appropriate force. It is a tough task, but
10 air and space power is making a difference. For example, the Air Force has
11 taken the initiative to use airlift to move cargo and thereby reduce the reliance of
12 coalition forces on dangerous ground convoy operations.

13 Approximately 30,000 Airmen are now deployed to forward operating
14 bases in support of military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. In a 12-month period,
15 the Air Force flew more than a quarter of a million sorties in missions including
16 close air support, airlift, air refueling, aeromedical evacuation and intelligence-
17 surveillance-reconnaissance. Battlefield Airmen are providing tactical air control
18 to help direct bombs and bullets at terrorists with sharpening accuracy. These
19 Airmen engage in the full spectrum of missions, from C4ISR to close air support
20 to training Iraqi security forces.

21 In addition to Battlefield Airmen, the Air Force is filling more than 1,900
22 combat positions in 16 different combat support skills for the Army. For example,

1 Airmen now serve as vehicle operators running convoys throughout Iraq. It is a
2 non-traditional mission for the Air Force, one that it has not performed since the
3 days of the Vietnam War. Whatever the role or mission, Airmen have proved that
4 they are up to the task. AFA salutes these Airmen in non-traditional roles.

5

6 **Space Capabilities**

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8 Day in and day out, Air Force operators based in Nevada remotely pilot
9 Unmanned Aircraft Systems over Iraq and Afghanistan, while space
10 professionals here at home keep constant watch over the global battlespace.

11 In the 21st century, space capabilities are truly joint in nature because they
12 serve all warfighters. Space provides for precise navigation and timing, missile
13 warning, surveillance, space control, weather tracking and communications. In
14 fact, space assets are essential to all military operations and to the nation.
15 Airmen and Soldiers in the field require critical information to do their jobs and to
16 stay ahead of the enemy.

17 Military space requirements and the need for larger bandwidth are
18 projected to increase exponentially in the future. More bandwidth means more
19 information and greater capacity to serve the intelligence community and
20 warfighters. Consequently, new systems such as the Space Radar, Space Based
21 Infrared System (SBIRS) and the Transformational Communications Satellite
22 (TSAT) program must be acquired. New communication developments include
23 laser communications, which hold considerable promise as a breakthrough

1 technology. As a key part of TSAT, laser communications will allow DoD to vastly
2 increase its bandwidth.

3
4 **Global Commitments**

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6 As if prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism were not enough,
7 thousands of dedicated Airmen are deployed elsewhere in the world in response
8 to US global commitments. More than 42,000 Air Force personnel based in
9 Japan, South Korea, Guam and other sites throughout the Pacific are providing
10 on-call combat capability to joint warfighters.

11
12 Pacific Air Forces serve to counter the threat posed by North Korea and a
13 rapidly modernizing Chinese military. At the same time, these Airmen are called
14 upon to respond to crises. They helped deliver more than 120 tons of relief
15 supplies to Sri Lanka and other nations devastated by the recent Indian Ocean
16 tsunami.

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18 On the other side of the world, more than 35,000 Airmen and civilians are
19 on duty as part of America's longstanding North Atlantic Treaty Organization
20 commitments. US Air Forces in Europe are as busy as ever, contrary to some
21 predictions following the end of the Cold War. Airmen have flown more than
22 27,000 sorties helping to enforce the peace accords in the Balkans. In support of
23 the Global War on Terrorism, they are also pulling duty on the flight lines at
24 airfields in former Soviet bloc nations.

25

1 Stateside, Air Force personnel responded when Hurricane Katrina
2 devastated America's Gulf Coast. Active duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen
3 rapidly deployed to assist with this national tragedy—by mid-September 2005,
4 they had conducted more than 5,000 rescues, treated over 6,000 patients and
5 evacuated more than 27,000 people to safety.

6

7 Joint commanders know the Air Force can be counted on across the full
8 spectrum of missions, from combat to humanitarian operations. Because the Air
9 Force makes the whole force better, AFA believes that a strong national
10 commitment is necessary in order to sustain these capabilities.

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12 **Air Sovereignty and Homeland Defense**

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14 On the home front, Guard, Reserve and active duty pilots continue to fly
15 air defense missions in Operation Noble Eagle. Fulfilling the air sovereignty
16 mission now requires the efforts of 10,000 Airmen. On any given day, they
17 support 40 to 50 fighters, a dozen tankers and Airborne Warning and Control
18 System Aircraft that take off, refuel, and land at bases across the US

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20 While Americans go about their daily lives, Airmen patrol above our cities,
21 seaports and critical infrastructure. It is all part of a larger effort, led by the
22 Department of Homeland Security but involving all the services, the intelligence
23 community, other government agencies and local law enforcement.

24

25 AFA believes that improving homeland security across the board is
absolutely necessary. Specifically, the Administration and Congress must work

1 together to fully fund the cost of the air defense mission in the Air Force budget.
2 Additionally, we urge the President and Congress to continue to follow through
3 with national intelligence reform to make the military mission of homeland
4 defense more manageable. Finally, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and other
5 natural disasters, we must make our disaster response more agile and ensure
6 we have the proper equipment necessary to support these missions.

7 **The Unmet Challenge**

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9 These are especially critical times for our nation because of irrevocable
10 decisions that will be made during the coming year. Some years ago, DoD
11 developed a framework which, if used properly, would produce a reasonable
12 balance of attention to both current risk and future risk. AFA believes that we
13 must make the necessary investments today to win the Global War on Terrorism.
14 At the same time, we must not allow excessive focus on near-term operational
15 risk to mortgage the future capability of the joint force. Air and space dominance
16 cannot be taken for granted.

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18 In keeping with our mission, we the members of the Air Force Association
19 will work actively and aggressively to educate the public about defense, advocate
20 air and space power development and support the total United States Air Force.

1 **Air Force Association 2006 Top Issues**

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3 [The Top Issues of the Air Force Association complements the 2006 AFA Statement of Policy.
4 Each of the Top Issues is significant, and they are listed in no particular order of priority.]

6 **Resources for Defense**

7 President Bush's proposed Fiscal 2006 defense budget of approximately
8 \$419 billion represents a five percent increase over the Fiscal 2005 defense
9 budget. The 2005 figure does not count some \$45 billion in emergency funds
10 earmarked by Congress to help cover most—but not all—of the estimated cost of
11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Air Force modernization, recapitalization and
12 transformation budgets have been cut to help cover the shortfall in funding.
13 Additionally, the Fiscal 2006 budget does not include funding for new tankers or
14 other pressing needs.

15 Historically, when our nation has been threatened, Americans provided
16 the Armed Forces with the resources that it needed to remain strong and defeat
17 the enemy. Even though the nation is engaged in a deadly Global War on
18 Terrorism, we are committing only about four percent of Gross Domestic Product
19 (GDP) to the Armed Forces. By comparison, in 1986, during the Cold War, our
20 nation devoted 6.2 percent of the GDP to defense. In 1968, during the Vietnam
21 War, we devoted 9.4 percent of GDP to defense. It is time to rethink the level of
22 resources for fighting the war and funding the services.

23 ***AFA believes the nation must balance resources with taskings and***
24 ***spend more on national defense to support the National Military Strategy.***

1 ***Congress and the Department of Defense must work together to***
2 ***recapitalize and modernize the Armed Forces' equipment, foster***
3 ***transformation and improve quality of life programs. National security***
4 ***imperatives require the US to commit to full funding of our defense***
5 ***requirements annually, to include recapitalization and funding for***
6 ***operations to fight the Global War on Terrorism.***

7 **The Global War on Terrorism**

8 Nothing less than our survival as a nation hinges on defeating the forces
9 of international terrorism that attacked the United States on September 11, 2001.
10 We must never forget that approximately 3,000 Americans died in these terrorist
11 attacks. Since then, thousands of others have been killed in terrorist attacks
12 around the world. The National Counterterrorism Center reported 625 significant
13 terrorist attacks worldwide in 2004—the highest figure in two decades.

14 Iraq is currently the central front of this Global War on Terrorism. The
15 initial and successful military phase of operations has given way to a persistent
16 insurgency. Insurgents use improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers to
17 attack coalition forces as well as Iraqi citizens committed to reconstruction of the
18 country and self-rule.

19 In no uncertain terms, the outcome of the war will be determined by our
20 national resolve to see it through. The US must remain committed until a newly
21 trained Iraqi defense force can take on the terrorists directly, defeat them, and
22 provide for Iraqi's internal security.

1 ***The Air Force Association believes that we must continue to support***
2 ***our troops who are fighting the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq,***
3 ***Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world. It is in the best interests of***
4 ***the world's democratic nations for both Iraq and Afghanistan to become***
5 ***fully functioning and sovereign lands.***

6 **Homeland Defense Mission**

7 In addition to conducting military operations around the world, the Air
8 Force contributes greatly to the homeland defense mission. Air and space power
9 forces, in concert with US Northern Command and North American Aerospace
10 Defense Command (NORAD), have reduced homeland airspace vulnerabilities
11 that existed before 9/11. Use of fighters, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Civil Air
12 Patrol assets and advanced communication systems have strengthened the
13 observation and control of US airspace. The Air Force budget funds a large part
14 of these expanded operations.

15 The Air Force has also been called on to provide rapid emergency
16 response to large-scale domestic natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.
17 Airmen have performed heroically in these missions, providing search and
18 rescue, airlift, security, medical assistance and humanitarian relief.

19 Looking ahead, we must remain vigilant on the home front, improve
20 disaster response capabilities, and continue to prevent or interrupt terrorist
21 attacks before they can succeed. Terrorists will seek out vulnerable targets, as
22 was evidenced by the bombings of London's subway and bus system in July

1 2005. Much remains to be done to secure our own nation's critical infrastructure,
2 communications and transportation systems against such attacks.

3 ***AFA believes that homeland defense must remain a national priority***
4 ***and that Congress and the Administration should provide for homeland***
5 ***defense across the board. More specifically, they must fully fund Air Force***
6 ***requirements for aircraft flying hours, maintenance, communication***
7 ***systems and upgrades, as well as the personnel required to support***
8 ***Operation Noble Eagle. Finally, reforms are required to make emergency***
9 ***disaster response more agile, and the necessary equipment must be***
10 ***provided to support these missions.***

11 **Concern for Airmen**

12 Investing in people is fundamental to a strong Air Force. The service must
13 continue to lead in educating, training and providing professional development for
14 our enlisted members, officers and civilians across the Total Force. In the era of
15 the all-volunteer force, the Air Force has recruited and retained the best
16 educated, trained and most technically proficient Airmen ever. About a third of
17 the Fiscal 2006 Air Force budget, or approximately \$34 billion, is dedicated to
18 people. However, the demands of global operations have increased the stress on
19 Airmen and their families. Deployments have gotten longer and so has the list of
20 requirements for air and space forces.

21 The Air Force today has a steady-state requirement for about 20,000
22 Airmen to deploy overseas in vital rotational assignments, primarily in Southwest

1 Asia. This figure does not include thousands of other personnel permanently
2 stationed in Europe and the Pacific. Air and Space Expeditionary Forces (AEFs)
3 now are vulnerable to deploy for 120 days every 20 months. In addition to
4 personnel operating unmanned systems, intelligence-surveillance-
5 reconnaissance teams, refueling and airlift crews, Airmen are involved in
6 unconventional missions such as natural disaster emergency response, driving
7 trucks in convoys and providing security for Iraqi prisons, and they continue to be
8 heavily tasked. The importance of recruiting and retaining quality people in
9 sufficient numbers cannot be overstated.

10 ***AFA believes that Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD)***
11 ***must work together to set reasonable active duty end-strength levels that***
12 ***match resources to tasking so that the services have sufficient manpower***
13 ***to carry out the mission. We are fast approaching the point where the***
14 ***demands of the Global War on Terrorism are incompatible with the current***
15 ***size of the military. DoD should also strengthen quality of life programs to***
16 ***support the all-volunteer force. An open season for enrollment in the***
17 ***Montgomery G.I. Bill program should be provided for all Airmen. Also, an***
18 ***alternative leave program, which would allow military members to transfer***
19 ***annual leave to other members in emergency situations, should be***
20 ***explored.***

21 **Total Force Concerns**

1 The near seamless integration of active duty, Air National Guard and Air
2 Force Reserve Command forces has proven invaluable in America's military
3 response to the Global War on Terrorism. In the aftermath of 9/11, the viability of
4 the Total Force concept has been sternly tested by a series of worldwide
5 demands. The Total Force has not only excelled, but also proved itself to be a
6 force multiplier for joint warfighters.

7 To date, the Total Force has flown more than a quarter of a million sorties
8 for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; close air support; aerial
9 refueling; aeromedical evacuation; and airlift over Iraq and Afghanistan. About 25
10 percent of Airmen deployed to Southwest Asia are Air Guardsmen and Air Force
11 Reservists. Domestically, Guard and Reserve personnel have been tasked
12 heavily in relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters, providing
13 a significant portion of the airlift and aeromedical evacuation.

14 Citizen Airmen have proven they are invaluable members of the Air Force
15 team. However, we should not underestimate the cumulative impact of extended
16 call-ups on these components and their civilian employers.

17 Many Guardsmen and Reservists have put careers on hold, dropped out
18 of college programs, and shuttered self-run businesses. There is a point at which
19 there will be an erosion of recruiting and retention and a decline in employer
20 support. Already, Air National Guard recruiting has fallen short. Even higher than
21 expected retention figures cannot permanently offset recruiting shortfalls.

1 The increased use of Guard and Reserve forces has also highlighted the
2 inequities in the pay and compensation system that is based on Cold War
3 policies. These policies, such as earlier retirement and employer tax benefits,
4 need updating, and there must be increased access to TRICARE for the Guard
5 and Reserve.

6 As new technologies expand mission areas such as space, information
7 warfare, command and control and Unmanned Aircraft Systems, the Guard and
8 Reserve must remain equal partners with their active duty counterparts. Present
9 plans call for the service to retire older aircraft and replace them with newer but
10 fewer systems such as the F/A-22 and F-35. Fewer aircraft will result in fewer
11 bases and an alteration in the organizational structure of the total Air Force. To
12 succeed in the future, the Air Force must realign missions and organizations to
13 strengthen its capabilities by creating synergies between active duty, Guard and
14 Reserve units.

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16 ***AFA believes that close cooperation between active duty, Guard and***
17 ***Reserve units is the hallmark of Air Force history in providing for national***
18 ***defense. As the service looks to invest human and capital resources in the***
19 ***future, it must do so in keeping with the principal of inclusion of the Guard***
20 ***and Reserve. Finally, Congress must get on with appointing the remaining***
21 ***members of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve that will***
22 ***study the roles and missions of the Guard and other reserve components***
23 ***as well as their compensation and benefits.***

1 **Civilian Workforce Concerns**

2 Department of Defense (DoD) civilians now serve on the front lines in
3 response to the Global War on Terrorism. Civilians serving in combat zones in
4 Iraq and Afghanistan often face the same hazards and hardships as military
5 members.

6 More than 40 percent of Air Force civilians will be eligible for retirement by
7 2008. Moreover, according to a survey by the Office of Personnel Management
8 (OPM), about 20 percent of federal employees plan on leaving their current jobs
9 for employment outside of DoD. Many are scientists, engineers, program
10 managers and others in technical career fields. Combined with early retirements
11 and the time required to hire and train new employees, this inevitable personnel
12 exodus will increase staffing pressures throughout the Air Force. Sustained and
13 innovative recruiting programs will be needed to maintain workforce quality.

14 The National Security Personnel System (NSPS), due to launch later this
15 year, will transform the way DoD hires and trains the workforce of the future. The
16 change to NSPS has generated lots of interest. So far, DoD has received more
17 than 27,000 comments from current employees concerning the new personnel
18 system. The NSPS will help DoD to better balance the interests of national
19 security and employees. Its policies will also affect pay, promotions, performance
20 and evaluations. The best way to achieve a smooth NSPS implementation is
21 through continued collaboration and transparency throughout the development of
22 the program.

1 ***AFA believes that DoD must provide fair and appropriate benefits for***
2 ***civilians serving in combat zones. This should include equal treatment to***
3 ***civilians in terms of tax exemptions, accidental death and dismemberment***
4 ***coverage and other benefits. It should also take the necessary steps to***
5 ***manage the coming retirement bow wave and transition to NSPS.***

6 **Commitment to Veterans and Retirees**

7 The increasing cost of health care and the growing number of veterans
8 and retirees requiring medical treatment are the most pressing veteran issues. Of
9 the 25 million veterans alive today, almost three-quarters served during periods
10 of war and hostilities.

11 A growing number of veterans returning from Operation Enduring
12 Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are seeking medical treatment from the
13 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Many will need extensive and costly long-
14 term medical care. In this regard, it is time to treat VA health care as an integral
15 cost of the war. VA had initially estimated that approximately 23,500 veterans
16 would return this year from Iraq and Afghanistan and seek medical treatment.
17 The actual figure was later revised upward to 103,000, creating a huge budget
18 shortfall. Future obligations related to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
19 could push this figure even higher. Congress should continue to support and fully
20 fund the VA health care system to avoid this problem in the future.

21 A major concern among Air Force retirees is access to affordable health
22 care. The Department of Defense (DoD) recently announced plans to close some

1 of its in-patient medical treatment facilities. This action will further shift the
2 medical care responsibility for military retirees and their families from DoD to
3 civilian providers under TRICARE. However, TRICARE has already had difficulty
4 attracting providers to the program in some areas due to payment rates,
5 administrative burdens and/or a lack of physicians. As DoD continues to divest
6 itself of the responsibility for retiree medical care, Congress must ensure military
7 retirees and their families have reasonable access to health care throughout the
8 various civilian communities and that sufficient funds remain available to cover
9 any increased costs.

10 The VA should undertake other reforms: The number of VA employees
11 assigned to process claims should be increased; the waiting time for veterans to
12 be medically evaluated must be reduced; veterans should be allowed to receive
13 routine and preventive care in non-VA facilities; DoD and VA should implement a
14 single separation physical to expedite disability claims; and patient databases
15 maintained by the VA, DoD and the Social Security Administration should be
16 tightly integrated to improve processing and management.

17 Finally, a number of antiquated laws are still preventing former service
18 members and their survivors from receiving benefits to which they are entitled.
19 Congress has enacted legislation that provides for concurrent receipt of retired
20 and disability pay for veterans with disability ratings of 50 percent or higher. Still,
21 for veterans with ratings of less than 50 percent, the denial of concurrent receipt
22 amounts to nothing less than a "Disabled Veterans Tax." The Administration and

1 Congress must eliminate this tax and end discriminatory policies pertaining to the
2 Survivor Benefit Plan. Legislation that leaves any disabled retired veteran or a
3 surviving spouse behind through compromise, or extended phase-in, is not in the
4 best interest of the nation.

5 ***The Air Force Association remains committed to the principle that***
6 ***our nation must keep faith with promises made to veterans, retirees and***
7 ***their survivors. We urge Congress to enact appropriate legislation to***
8 ***address the ongoing and pressing needs of this group.***

9 **Science and Technology Concerns**

10 The Science and Technology (S&T) program provides for basic and
11 applied research and advanced technology development. In the Fiscal 2006
12 budget, Air Force S&T is projected to total \$1.98 billion, which includes \$1.4
13 billion in core science and technology efforts and \$77.8 million in joint unmanned
14 combat air vehicles. This is a relatively small level of investment when compared
15 to the overall Air Force budget of approximately \$102.9 billion. Moreover, the
16 level of overall S&T investments throughout the Department of Defense (DoD)
17 and the private sector remains a concern.

18 In order for the US military to remain dominant in science and technology,
19 it must pursue advanced military capabilities, from microchips to directed energy
20 and hypersonic technology. Additionally, the Air Force and DoD must recruit and
21 maintain a strong technical workforce of engineers and scientists—both military
22 and civilian. The Air Force has launched a number of initiatives to increase the

1 emphasis on science and technology (S&T) programs, upgrade industrial base
2 facilities and provide for improved force protection.

3 ***AFA believes that investments in S&T help produce breakthrough***
4 ***technologies for the Air Force of the future. DoD and the Air Force should***
5 ***work toward the previously stated goal of S&T investment at three percent***
6 ***of the overall budget. Adequate resources must be applied to invigorating***
7 ***and strengthening the public/private partnership of Air Force, industry and***
8 ***academia.***

9 **Modernization**

10 Air Force modernization, which was deferred due to the procurement
11 holiday of the 1990s, has been trimmed and delayed for too long. Today, the Air
12 Force maintains the oldest fleet it has ever had. Unfortunately, some of these
13 systems are costing more and more to maintain, yet they continue to deteriorate.
14 The problem of age extends across the inventory from aircraft to space and
15 missile systems and ground equipment. Many systems are being used well
16 beyond their planned design lives. The continued viability of legacy systems will
17 require recapitalization and investment dollars.

18 For the US to remain a dominant air and space power, the Air Force must
19 be modernized. The F/A-22 and F-35 fighter programs and a replacement tanker
20 must be fully funded. Unmanned Aircraft (UA) programs require continued
21 funding. Development of a next generation long-range strike capability and
22 interim long-range strike platform must be accelerated. The Department of

1 Defense (DoD) should continue with multiyear procurement of C-130Js and act
2 quickly to acquire more airlifters once the new Mobility Capabilities Study is
3 completed. For the Air Force to continue providing global capability and global
4 airlift support for US military forces, Congress and DoD must expeditiously
5 address the long-term requirement for replacement tanker and airlift aircraft.

6 In keeping with the space roadmap, the Air Force needs to replace its
7 legacy systems with vastly more capable technology. Further, Minuteman III
8 needs continued sustainment and eventual replacement. Finally, funding needs
9 to be provided for the Air Force to modernize its vanguard force that includes
10 Battlefield Airmen and security forces.

11 ***AFA believes that it is long past time to get on with the formidable***
12 ***task of air and space modernization. Congress and DoD must buy the***
13 ***number of systems the Air Force needs to do the mission.***

14 **C4ISR Spectrum**

15 C4ISR platforms are force multipliers in high demand but short supply.
16 These systems allow warfighters to gather intelligence and to see and target
17 enemy forces with precision guided munitions. Air Force C4ISR systems include
18 the RC-135 fleet, E-8 Joint STARS, E-3 AWACS, the U-2, space-based systems
19 and the Air Operations Center (AOC). Together with Global Hawk and Predator,
20 they provide unmatched multisource and all-weather capability to warfighters.
21 The Air Force needs the new E-10 Multisensor Command and Control Aircraft to
22 help identify targets—including cruise missiles—and control the battlespace.

1 C4ISR systems also facilitate command and control of Unmanned Aircraft
2 Systems (UAS) and E-10A time-sensitive targeting. The Air Force currently
3 operates approximately 300 UAS, the Army about 600, and the Navy and Marine
4 Corps about 150. The Air Force has the mission of airspace control and has
5 more and longer experience with UAS. The Air Force has proposed that an
6 executive agent for UAS be designated to unify and streamline the Department of
7 Defense's Unmanned Aircraft (UA) procurement and management and foster
8 common operational concepts and procedures.

9 To that end, the new Joint Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Center of Excellence
10 at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, is designed to improve interoperability and
11 examine the use of sensors and intelligence-collection assets in combat. It will
12 concentrate on UA technology, joint concepts, training and tactics.

13 ***AFA believes that Congress must fund C4ISR systems in greater***
14 ***numbers and with necessary capability upgrades. The E-10A and Space***
15 ***Radar must be fully funded, along with research and development of other***
16 ***space-based, manned and unmanned C4ISR systems. Additionally, the***
17 ***Department of Defense should designate the Air Force as the executive***
18 ***agent for Unmanned Aircraft Systems.***

19 **Industrial Base Support**

20 The US military industrial base has gone through a radical reshaping due
21 to fewer major defense programs, consolidation of the defense industry and
22 foreign competition. Together, these factors have eroded the industrial base for

1 manufacturing defense products. Since 1994, the number of prime contractors
2 doing major aerospace defense work has gone from 21 to four. Presently, the US
3 has more shipyards than it does factories producing military aircraft.

4 Reduced production capacity has a number of negative side effects,
5 including higher systems costs, reduced competitiveness and less surge
6 capability. Reduced capacity also hurts an electronics manufacturing and
7 technology base already in decline. Equally distressing is a low aerospace
8 employment rate that adversely impacts the recruitment of scientists, engineers
9 and technical personnel.

10 A revitalized industrial preparedness program is key to transitioning
11 science and technology from the laboratories to the production floor and is one of
12 the critical elements of a strengthened pre-systems acquisition process. Sensible
13 acquisition policies, business practices and support for research and
14 development of manufacturing technology are also needed.

15 In order to maintain air and space dominance in the future, the nation
16 needs a healthy defense industrial base. The next Quadrennial Defense Review
17 must accurately examine defense strategy, force structure, force modernization,
18 infrastructure, budget and other elements of the defense program and policies.
19 The Department of Defense (DoD) should embrace the recommendations of the
20 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission to reconfigure and reduce
21 excess infrastructure in a fair and transparent way. This will help free up dollars
22 for modernization and transformation.

1 ***AFA believes that DoD should define a minimum aerospace***
2 ***industrial base and develop strategies that ensure America remains the***
3 ***world leader in aerospace technology, innovation and production.***
4 ***Moreover, Congress, DoD and industry must work together to find***
5 ***solutions to challenges facing the defense industrial base. We must***
6 ***continue to develop incentives for enhancing manufacturing productivity,***
7 ***encouraging innovation and revitalizing the aerospace workforce. Also, the***
8 ***US must pursue tax, trade and regulatory policies to improve the***
9 ***attractiveness of US products in the global economy. DoD will need the***
10 ***support of Congress in carrying out this important initiative.***