The Air Force Association’s mission is to promote a dominant United States Air Force and a strong national defense, and to honor Airmen and our Air Force Heritage.

“The Air Force is too small for what the nation is asking us to do. We have 312 operational squadrons today. The Air Force We Need has 386 operational squadrons by 2030.”

The Honorable Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force

A great power competition has emerged with Russia and China, while increased threats developed from mid-tier powers and rogue regimes. Our military and technological advantages have eroded, and U.S. national and economic security is at risk. American air, space, and cyber superiority are imperative for any military operation, and necessary to maintain peace. All domains are in jeopardy.

While the number of Air Force missions increased, personnel and aircraft numbers declined by 30 percent and 37 percent, respectively, since the 1991 Gulf War. Faced with the combined effects of decreased readiness and aging weapons systems and equipment, the Air Force is too small for its many missions. The Air Force has been in continuous combat operations for 28 years, taking a severe toll on Airmen and their families.
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We support the following:

**REBUILD COMBAT READINESS IN AIR, SPACE, AND CYBERSPACE**

- The Air Force needs stable and predictable funding—at adequate funding levels. Continuing Resolutions (CRs) degrade readiness and cost billions of dollars.

- The last two defense budgets slowed the decline in readiness, however, our nation’s security needs more than a two-year budget fix. AFA supports the president’s $750 billion FY 2020 budget request.

**FORCE STRUCTURE**

- Size force structure to meet mission requirements. Increase Active Duty to 350,000; Air National Guard to 120,000, and the Reserve to 72,500 personnel.

- Grow the Total Force to 386 total squadrons, to meet the Air Force’s many requirements.

- AFA opposes the establishment of a separate military service responsible for space at this time. The Space Force proposal is a resource question writ large: too much mission, too few dollars. Standing up combatant command (US Space Command) to focus on space warfare is appropriate. Rapidly reducing space capability gaps, while re-establishing US Space Command, is the best way to address advancing threats to space.

**RECAPITALIZATION / MODERNIZATION**

- Accelerate the Air Force’s top three programs:
  - F-35A Lightning II— Speed up acquisition of the strike fighter, which is the only fifth-generation fighter in production and is survivable against today’s defenses.
  - KC-46A Pegasus tanker— Replace costly 50-year-old aircraft that are at the end of service lives.
  - B-21 Raider bomber— Procure 180 B-21 bombers. The current long-range strike force averages 50 years in age and 87 percent of today’s bomber fleet predate stealth.

- Advance the Long Range Standoff Weapon (LRSO) and the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD)—critical components of the nation’s nuclear triad.

- Endorse the Air Force’s “Next Generation ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) Dominance Flight Plan,” that fuses data from legacy platforms and incorporates emerging technologies.

- Encourage and reward rapid development and acquisition programs such as the Air Force’s Light Attack demonstration.

- Grow capabilities in Nuclear Command, Control & Communications (NC3) and Multi-Domain Command and Control (MDC2).

**INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY**

- Invest at least 10 percent of Science & Technology (S&T) funding in sustainment technologies, and increase the budget to drive long-term innovation and dominance in air and space power.

- Advance hypersonic technologies to fully integrate operations in the air and space environments.

- Develop Artificial Intelligence (AI) investments and strategies, which enhance warfighting capabilities.