

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

**SUBJECT: THE FUTURE OF THE MILITARY SERVICES AND
CONSEQUENCES OF DEFENSE SEQUESTRATION**

**STATEMENT OF: GENERAL NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
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Ten years after 9/11, Airmen and their Army, Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard teammates continue to serve the Nation with distinction, performing admirably across a broad spectrum of operations. In particular, our service members have honed their skills to a fine edge after more than a decade of effectively conducting counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.

As we evaluate our strategy for the future, we must protect the progress that we have made by addressing the undeniable stresses and strains on our service members and their families, as well as the tremendous toll on our battle-worn equipment, resulting from more than a decade of sustained global operations. This is particularly true for the Air Force, which has been in sustained combat operations for more than two decades, dating back to Operation DESERT STORM.

We also must recognize and prepare for the ongoing evolution of a highly dynamic, increasingly complex geostrategic environment in which the proliferation of technology is allowing more and more actors to exert influence and effect desired outcomes. In order to attain a full-spectrum portfolio of capabilities that is prepared to address wide-ranging security threats, we must internalize the hard-fought, hard-learned lessons of the past decade of operations against primarily terrorist and insurgent elements, as we judiciously prepare for the possibility of future higher-end contingencies involving potential near-peer actors.

Because our Nation's debt crisis has a direct bearing on our national security, the U.S. military will also tighten its fiscal belt, and be a part of the solution to find our way back to a vibrant national economy. To this end, the Department of Defense began by identifying more than \$100 billion in efficiencies, shifting the savings from overhead to operational and modernization requirements. In the Air Force alone, nearly \$33 billion were reallocated to support required capabilities more directly. Moreover, we found an additional \$10 billion in savings to contribute to deficit reduction as we completed work on the 2012 budget. The Air Force continues to review all areas of the budget—including force structure, operations and investment, and personnel—for further savings.

But to sustain the military's ability to protect the Nation against wide-ranging threats in a very dynamic strategic and fiscal environment, we will have to make extremely difficult decisions—for example, reducing investment in many areas, but also enhancing capabilities in others in order to compensate. These choices must be based on strategic considerations, not compelled solely by budget targets. A non-strategy-based approach that proposes cuts without

correlation to national security priorities or core defense capabilities will lead to a hollowed-out force, similar to those that followed every major conflict since World War I—a U.S. military with aging equipment, extremely stressed human resources, less-than-adequate training, and ultimately, declining readiness and effectiveness. We must avoid repeating this scenario by steering clear of ill-conceived, across-the-board cuts, which do not allow us to deliberately accept risks, to devise strategies to mitigate those risks, and to maintain a capable, if smaller, effective force. Instead, sweeping cuts of the sort in the Budget Control Act’s sequester provision would slash our investment accounts; raid our operations and maintenance accounts, forcing the curtailment of important daily operations and sustainment efforts; and inflict real damage to the effectiveness and well-being of our Airmen and their families. Ultimately, such a scenario gravely undermines our ability to protect the Nation.

But beyond the manner in which potential budget cuts are executed, even the most thoroughly-deliberated strategy may not be able to overcome dire consequences if cuts go far beyond the \$450 billion-plus in anticipated national security budget reductions over the next 10 years. This is true whether the cuts are directed by sequestration or by Joint Select Committee proposal, and whether they are deliberately targeted or across-the-board. From the ongoing budget review, the Department is confident that further spending reductions beyond the more than \$450 billion that are needed to comply with the Budget Control Act’s first round of cuts cannot be done without damaging our core military capabilities and therefore our national security.

From the perspective of the Air Force, whose “real” total obligation authority is already only 20 percent of the Department of Defense top-line—the lowest of any military service since World War II—further cuts will amount to:

- further reductions to our end strength, both civilian and military, despite the fact that the Air Force already is substantially smaller than it was ten years ago;
- continued aging and reductions in the Air Force’s fleet of fighters, strategic bombers, airlifters, and tankers, as well as to associated bases and infrastructure;
- adverse effects on training and readiness, which has seen a decline since 2003; and
- diminished capacity to execute concurrent missions across the spectrum of operations and over vast distances on the globe.

A smaller Air Force, as a result of anticipated budget cuts, still will remain an unmatched, superbly capable force, but as a matter of simple physical limitations, it will be able to

accomplish fewer tasks in fewer places in any given period of time. Therefore, while the Nation has become accustomed to effective execution of wide-ranging operations in rapid succession or even simultaneously—for example, the Air Force’s concurrent response to crisis situations in Japan and Libya, which ranged more than 5,500 miles in distance and the operational spectrum from humanitarian relief to combat airpower, all the while maintaining operations in Afghanistan and Iraq—it will have to accept reduced coverage in future similar, concurrent scenarios if further large cuts to the national security budget are allowed to take effect. Also, our Airmen and their families, throughout the Total Force, would face intensified deployment schedules, and our equipment would become aged and worn more quickly, because fewer resources would be available to commit to the Nation’s emerging needs.

As part of our strategy to mitigate the effects of decreased capacity, we will continue to strengthen our international partnerships, especially where common interests and shared security responsibilities are involved. More importantly, we will continue to promote efforts toward advancing Joint interdependence, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testified before this committee last week. This will require each military service “to maintain and be the masters of their core competencies and their unique service cultures, but...[to] operate as a single cohesive team.” To meet the Chairman’s intent, the Air Force will continue to make vital contributions to the Joint team’s portfolio, integrating airpower’s four unique, enduring qualities: (1) domain control; (2) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; (3) air mobility; and (4) global strike. These four core contributions—plus our unparalleled ability to command and control air, space, and cyber systems—will sustain the Joint team’s advantage, and inform our analysis as we prioritize our efforts in each of the most critical dimensions: materiel, personnel, training, and readiness.

Reducing any of these core contributions, in addition to potential diminished capacities as discussed earlier, will fundamentally alter the complexion of your Air Force. We therefore are focused on sustaining and strengthening these core functions. Moreover, specific systems such as the F-35A, the centerpiece of our future tactical air combat capability; KC-46A, the backbone of our worldwide power projection capability and thus our Nation’s global expeditionary posture; and the Long-Range Strike “family of systems,” all represent substantial elements of our overall suite of capabilities and thus must all be pursued through disciplined—and certainly efficient—modernization efforts. Even though we are responsibly drawing down in Afghanistan

and Iraq, we know that historically, as U.S. forces withdraw from active combat, the relative requirement for airpower typically increases. By focusing on our core contributions, we are preserving the character of your Air Force—ready to continue responding effectively to the Nation’s airpower and global power projection needs.

In short, Airmen remain fully committed to executing current missions effectively while building a future force according to operational risk, capability and capacity requirements, personnel and materiel needs, and prudent, if frugal, strategies for investment in modernization, recapitalization, and readiness. We do not have to forsake national security to achieve fiscal stability. If we undertake a strategy-based approach to necessary budget cuts, and keep those cuts to a reasonable level, we can assure our full-spectrum preparedness in providing our unique capabilities, affording a wider range of options for rapid, tailorable, and flexible power projection—*Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power*—on which our Nation’s security and strategic interests rely.