

Background

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Airmen vs. Modernization: The Air Force Budget Dilemma

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The primary mission of the U.S. Air Force is to fly and fight in defense of U.S. global interests in air, space, and cyberspace.¹ To continue fulfilling this mission, the Air Force must modernize its rapidly aging fleet while simultaneously maintaining robust personnel levels to meet current missions. As Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley recently commented:

The fight we're waging in Iraq and Afghanistan is not our only concern. It is not the only challenge to this country. We cannot—cannot—afford to become target-fixated on counterterrorism or insurgency. We cannot completely focus on Iraq or Afghanistan and forget about the potentially global complexities in competitions in the future.²

Air Force leaders advocate maintaining a strong air fleet today to hedge against countries such as China and Iran, which are significantly building up their militaries.

The Department of Defense and Congress's continued focus on providing resources for immediate operations is beginning to come at the expense of the long-term health of the services. This is evident particularly as the Navy and Air Force continue to provide personnel and resources to relieve stress on U.S. ground forces. This cycle is unsustainable, and all of the services will need to achieve the following while major combat operations persist:

- Modernize and recapitalize their fleets,
- Invest substantially in personnel to retain and recruit the future forces necessary to meet U.S. strategic defense objectives, and

Talking Points

- Current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have strained the U.S. Air Force's ability to field trained and ready forces, support ongoing operations, and modernize simultaneously.
- America's armed forces are facing tightening budgets that risk the return of a "hollow force." Short-term budgetary needs are compromising long-term procurement and readiness.
- The Air Force has drastically cut personnel levels to fund other budgetary priorities even as Air Force leaders acknowledge that current airlift plans will not meet the airlift needs of the expanding Army and Marine Corps.
- When the services must choose between equally important priorities to pay for current operations, the nation is not spending enough on defense. Maintaining a healthy defense posture requires spending at least 4 percent of gross domestic product on national defense annually.

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- Purchase new systems and platforms after years of procurement underfunding.

According to its leaders, budgetary concerns are forcing the Air Force to choose between modernization and the size of its force as the fleet wears out and the personnel are in higher demand. While the U.S. Army and Marine Corps are growing, the Air Force's original budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2008 envisioned reducing endstrength by an additional 20,000 airmen for a total reduction of nearly 60,000 by 2009. However, increased deployments of ground forces to Iraq and the projected growth of the Army and Marine Corps will likely require additional airlift and support from airmen, and this has caused Air Force leaders to reconsider the end-strength reductions.

The current growth of America's ground forces means that the Air Force can no longer afford to reduce personnel levels further to pay for equally important modernization efforts. Doing so would force the Air Force to accept dangerous levels of risk to achieve all of its global missions and to hedge against future threats.

Today's Air Force is still the best in the world, and maintaining that capability requires adequate and sustained funding to continue deterring terrorist movements, rogue nations, and emerging threats. Short-term budgetary decisions are being made at the expense of long-term procurement and readiness throughout the Air Force. In the words of Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne, "there is no room for error in the 2008 Air Force budget."³

Current operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the globe have strained the Air Force's ability to man, operate, maintain, and mod-

ernize simultaneously—all of which are essential to avoiding a "hollow force." Congress needs to broaden its strategic focus beyond the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and take a long-term approach to security while fully funding Air Force modernization efforts and endstrength.

Strain on Airlift: Not Just This Gulf War

Air Force aircraft have sustained excessive wear and tear over the past 16 years of continuous operations abroad. Since Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force has been flying an average of 2.3 million flight hours per year, but the Air Force now has 2,500 fewer aircraft than in 1991 and is operating at a much higher tempo than during the 1990s, when the Air Force was tasked with numerous non-military missions.⁴ In Iraq, almost three-quarters of the military forces and materials moved by air were transported in C-17s. Due to consistent use for nearly two decades, the Air Force C-17s and other aircraft have sustained excessive wear and tear and are breaking in more places and more often.

The C-130Js have also experienced unprecedented use, exceeding programmed operating hours by 24,000 hours to help to take hundreds of convoys and thousands of servicemembers off the roads in Afghanistan and Iraq. On a monthly basis, the Air Force takes about 8,000 to 9,000 troops off roads where they would be vulnerable to improvised explosive device (IED) attacks.⁵ Some C-130Es can no longer deploy in combat because the Air Force has literally flown the wings off of them.⁶ At a recent Senate hearing, Secretary Wynne testified:

C-130Es are excluded from theater because they are so broke[n]. We are running only C-130Hs, what used to be the backbone of the

1. U.S. Air Force, "Air Force Mission," at www.af.mil/main/welcome.asp (May 8, 2007).
2. John T. Bennett, "China, Iran Top USAF's Threat List: Anti-Terror Effort Takes Backseat in Procurement Priorities," *Defense News*, February 20, 2007.
3. Michael Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, March 20, 2007.
4. Major General Frank Faykes, "FY08 President's Budget: 'We Are America's Airmen,'" U.S. Air Force, February 5, 2007, p. 27, at www.saffm.hq.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-070212-012.pdf (May 8, 2007).
5. General T. Michael Moseley, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, February 28, 2007.
6. Lauren Bigge, "Flying the Wings Off—Literally," *The Air Force Magazine Daily Report*, March 15, 2007, at <http://dailyreport.afa.org/AFA/Reports/2007/Month03/Day15> (May 8, 2007).

National Guard. We recognize that we are flying these on double time, and are essentially probably going to forecast their exhaustion at some point in time. With that, we think we should backstop our tactical airlift with a request for C-130Js, and we think that they have shown a dramatic effect in direct delivery for getting convoys off the road—all of the Marine convoys except for troops—and most 9,000 of our Army, Air Force, and Navy personnel who are driving convoys every month. And this, sir, I'd like to extend.⁷

In this tightening fiscal environment, the Air Force continues to reduce various programs while the other services are increasingly relying on additional airlift capacity. Demands for airlift include helping to remove convoys from dangerous routes in Iraq, providing forces with extended logistics reach, and penetrating deeper into terrorist havens in Afghanistan. General Norton Schwartz, commander of U.S. Transportation Command, recently highlighted the importance of airlift, stating that a “distributed fight,” such as in Afghanistan, requires airlift because missions often “cannot be effectively prosecuted from main operating bases.”⁸ General Moseley recently said that the need for strategic airlift is expected to increase, which means that the C-5 modernization program “makes more sense now than ever.”⁹

The demand for airlift goes well beyond current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Admiral William J. Fallon, commander of U.S. Pacific Command from February 2005 to March 2007, noted that the command's posture is affected by the “shortage of responsive strategic air and ship lift to support force sustainment and deployment to operating areas.”¹⁰

While the airlift requirements continue unabated, the Air Force is dramatically cutting end-strength to free funding for competing priorities. Secretary Wynne said that the 2008 budget is “so delicately balanced” that there is no room to free an extra \$2 billion for strategic airlift even as senior Air Force officials acknowledge that current plans for airlift will not meet the needs of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps.¹¹

The highly constrained Air Force budget is under intense pressure as the Air Force seeks to cope with the age of its fleet. Secretary Wynne summarized the dilemma:

[W]e're in a very interesting place right now where our land-component brothers are growing, our strategic airlift inventory is static, our C-5s are becoming much harder to maintain and the reliability [of] them is in question, the C-17 line is about to be shut down, and that's the concern. That's that crease in history that we're in right now where we're going to have to make some decisions.¹²

The looming crisis is evident in the numbers. The average age of military aircraft in 1973 during the Vietnam War was nine years, compared to today's average of 24 years. While the average age of aircraft is rising rapidly, the readiness to meet Air Force current missions, including Air National Guard readiness, has declined by 17 percent since 2001, primarily because of the high operational tempo.¹³

Currently, more than 800 aircraft (14 percent of the fleet) are grounded or operating under flying restrictions, causing overall combat readiness to decline in part because of “the aging fleet and our ability to get those airplanes in the air.” In addition,

7. Wynne, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate.

8. “Afghan Environment Requires Airlift,” *The Air Force Magazine Daily Report*, March 19, 2007, at <http://dailyreport.afa.org/AFA/Reports/2007/Month03/Day19> (May 8, 2007).

9. Gayle S. Putrich, “USAF Prefers More C-130Js over Other Cargo Lifters,” *Defense News*, March 26, 2007.

10. Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, “U.S. Pacific Command Posture,” testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, March 7, 2007, at http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FCPACOM030707/Fallon_Testimony030707.pdf (May 8, 2007).

11. Megan Scully, “Air Force Expects Future Airlift Fleet to Exceed 300 Planes,” *CongressDaily AM*, March 20, 2007.

12. Wynne, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate.

13. Faykes, “FY08 President's Budget,” pp. 14–15.

maintaining older planes costs more money, and delayed modernization only leads to increased maintenance costs later. Maintenance costs increased 38 percent from 1996 to 2006; maintenance man-hours increased by 50 percent compared with flying hours; and the workload for heavy repairs rose 41 percent.¹⁴

The need to modernize the fleet is immediate. General Moseley recently stated that the Air Force “must modernize the fleet now.... It is not a discretionary luxury. We can’t afford to take another procurement holiday.”¹⁵ The Air Force is also grappling with rising costs for fuel, spare parts, and utilities and the cost of supporting older aircraft fleets.

Bordering on Broken: Difficult Decisions

Congress has complicated the situation by limiting the Air Force’s ability to free funds within its budget. In 2006, the Air Force decided to terminate the alternate engine program for the Joint Strike Fighter and use the estimated savings of \$1.8 billion on immediate funding needs such as unmanned aerial vehicles.¹⁶ However, Members of Congress were concerned that the Joint Strike Fighter program was too dependent on a single contractor and required the development of an alternate engine, the aircraft’s most critical component. In its FY 2008 budget, the Air Force has again requested elimination of the alternate engine program, but Congress is expected to give the same answer. These are equally legitimate efforts by Air Force leaders and Members of Congress to save money through competition or elimination. However, the outcome is unchanged, as the Air Force continuously shifts funding intended for longer-term projects to meet the immediate needs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Despite the C-17’s widespread utility and increased use, the Air Force currently plans to end C-17 procurement at 180 aircraft. Budget concerns rather than requirements appear to be driving this decision. The Pentagon’s original estimate concluded that the Air Force needed 40 additional planes to meet mission requirements—an estimate made before operations increased in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁷

Yet any potential cost savings will disappear if—or, more likely, when—the Air Force determines that it requires additional airlift capability. In response to the Air Force statement to stop procurement, Boeing recently announced that it had halted production of long-lead items and parts for the C-17, which is the beginning of closing the line by FY 2009.¹⁸ If the line is shut down, starting up another would cost much more than purchasing additional aircraft today. This strategically short-sighted decision is yet another example of the Air Force feeling compelled to sacrifice long-term goals for current budgetary needs.

Another difficult choice facing Air Force leadership concerns the decision to maintain the aging C-5A large transport aircraft. The workhorse of the air transport fleet is the C-17, but to maintain the needed number of transport aircraft and save money in the short run, the Air Force plans to spend \$85 million to upgrade C-5As instead of retiring them and increasing capabilities by purchasing additional C-17s.¹⁹ However, the costs of the C-5A upgrades are rising.

Secretary Wynne and General Moseley have been warning Congress that the C-5A upgrades may trip limits in the Nunn–McCurdy statute that requires the Department of Defense to report on programs

14. Dave Montgomery, “Just Plane Old: The Air Force’s Aging Fleet,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 27, 2007.

15. John T. Bennett, “Rethinking Extra Personnel Cuts: Ground Surge Means More Air Support: USAF Leaders,” *Defense News*, February 12, 2007.

16. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., “More Signs of a Future Hollow Force? The Air Force Cuts a Corner,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1039, April 18, 2006, at www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/wm1039.cfm.

17. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., “C-17 Shortfall More Evidence of a Hollow Force,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1198, August 21, 2006, p. 1, at www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/upload/wm_1198.pdf.

18. Carlo Munoz, “Lawmakers Mull C-5 Retirement to Buy More C-17 Globemasters,” *Inside the Air Force*, No. 10, March 9, 2007.

19. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., “First Echoes of a Hollow Force? Air Force Choices Make Little Sense,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 986, February 3, 2006, at www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/wm986.cfm.

experiencing unit cost increases of 15 percent or schedule delays of six months.²⁰ Additionally, General Mosley has said that maintaining congressionally mandated aircraft, like the C-5A, costs the Air Force around \$4.6 million per day. Ultimately, this causes planning and budgeting problems because the money is desperately needed for modernization and procurement.²¹

Typically, these types of fiscal decisions cost the American public more over time. Congress and the Air Force need to recognize the long-term consequences of using savings from personnel reductions to pay short-term bills. As summarized by General Moseley:

That means [that] if we don't do anything, given the top line that we've got, this Air Force will go from age 24, average, for the inventory to age 30 and then pretty soon we won't be able to fly any of the broke[n] airplanes.²²

Slashing Personnel to Pay the Bills

The budget strains extend beyond the modernization and procurement accounts to include personnel. Due to relatively stagnant top-line budgets and consistent reprogramming to offset current military operations, the Air Force has drastically cut personnel levels to fund other priorities. Many Members of Congress have expressed concern at both the pace and the extent of these cuts.

The cost of airmen continues to rise, placing Air Force leaders in a difficult position. As leaders reduce personnel to pay for other programs, the cost of the remaining airmen continues to increase thereby creating a net loss in both personnel and the attempt to locate additional savings. Personnel

spending increased by 57 percent over the past 10 years, while endstrength decreased by 8 percent.²³ While manpower is expensive, the high-quality people serving in today's all-volunteer military are the nation's most valuable weapon and yield incalculable dividends on the funds spent to train and equip them and to provide for their families.

The Air Force is planning to cut as many as 40,000 personnel in FY 2008, although this decision is being reviewed. Yet even as the Air Force is reducing personnel levels, between 17,000 and 21,000 airmen are relieving the strain on the Army and Marine Corps by serving in positions "in lieu of" soldiers or Marines, including detainee operations, interpreters, convoy operations, explosive ordnance disposal, and police training.²⁴

As technology improves and capabilities increase, fewer personnel are typically needed to operate or man various weapons systems. Immediate personnel reductions generally save money in the short term but place even greater stress on the already taxed smaller number of active and reserve forces. General Moseley recently asked his staff to "determine whether the service needs more cargo planes and personnel if the Army and Marine Corps grow by about 92,000 people." Specifically, the Air Force director of personnel is reviewing "how the drawdown to 316,000 active duty airmen by 2009 measures against the personnel needs for expanding airlift and other missions, such as flying remote-controlled aircraft."²⁵

The number of airmen serving in nontraditional jobs to relieve the strain on ground forces is likely to increase.²⁶ For example, as additional ground forces are heading to Iraq, military commanders

20. John T. Bennett and Gayle S. Putrich, "Upgraded C-5s vs. New C-17s: Will USAF Have Enough Data to Make a Choice?" *Defense News*, March 19, 2007.

21. Michael Bruno, "Air Force Leaders Eye Change to Personnel Reduction Plans," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, February 13, 2007.

22. Moseley, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives.

23. Faykes, "FY08 President's Budget," p. 12.

24. Michael Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, February 28, 2007.

25. Bruce Rolfsen and Vago Muradian, "USAF Chief Asks Deputies to Assess Transport, Personnel Needs," *Defense News*, April 16, 2007.

26. Erik Holmes, "More 'Soldier' Airmen Likely Despite Air Force Objections," *Air Force Times*, April 2, 2007.

have asked for more infantry troops along with military police. Because the Army does not have more to provide, the Air Force and Navy will likely contribute these personnel in support of the Army.

In the past, these personnel cuts were implemented to free funds to recapitalize the aging fleet, but now the Air Force may need these people to take on additional air support missions. If the Air Force leaders determine that they need more personnel than originally thought due to the growth in ground forces, it remains unclear how the service will free funding for essential procurement and recapitalization.²⁷

Competing Priorities

The Air Force's baseline budget has remained relatively static for the past several years. The budget totaled \$101.9 billion in FY 2006 and \$104.5 billion in FY 2007, and the FY 2008 budget request is for \$110.7 billion. The internal budget struggles are leading to tradeoffs that entail significantly more risk. As evident in testimony before the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, there is considerable tension between choosing to modernize or to retain personnel. As General Moseley confirmed, the Air Force has been reducing personnel to "get more new airplanes" in reaction to budgetary concerns.²⁸

The tradeoffs that the Air Force has made and continues to make between personnel and modernization are seriously endangering its readiness. The Vice Chief of the Air Force, General John D. W. Corley, told Congress that Air Force readiness has declined by 20 percent since 2001, adding that the Air Force is "strained and readiness is at risk." He attributes this "disturbing trend" to the service's inability to replace and modernize its aging fleet of aircraft. To make matters worse, he explained, the Air Force has 1,300 fewer airplanes but the same workload as 13 years ago.²⁹

The fiscal challenges facing the Air Force are so severe that the Air Force has robbed the account that funds its battle laboratories and is now being forced to close all seven laboratories. According to Air Force spokeswoman Major Morshe Araujo:

[F]iscal pressures on near-term readiness...and long-term procurement priorities...forced us to make tough decisions regarding key innovation programs and closing all seven of our battle labs is one of those tough decisions.³⁰

Choosing between aircraft modernization and force sizing is not occurring in a vacuum as airframes are wearing out quicker than anticipated. Declining readiness combined with an aging fleet and reduced buying power is causing a tradeoff in long-term modernization programs. If the Air Force continues modernization at the expense of its personnel under the current budgetary constraints, both will continue to suffer.

Replacing older aircraft with new ones is yet another challenge facing the Air Force today. The Air Force has approximately 6,000 aircraft and is buying about 60 new airplanes per year—a 100-year rate of recapitalization. The Air Force is "now the oldest of all the services."³¹

The Air Force also needs to purchase next-generation aircraft because the next war will not look like the last war. General Moseley remarked that U.S. aircraft "will face threats" from "increasingly lethal anti-access systems, weapons, sophisticated integrated air defense systems, enhanced surface-to-air missiles, advanced fighters, avionics, and air-to-air missiles." He offered a stark assessment of the future if procurement does not occur in greater numbers, noting that the U.S. air fleet is "at a point of obsolescence vis-à-vis these emerging threats."³²

27. Bennett, "Rethinking Extra Personnel Cuts."

28. Moseley, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives.

29. "Readiness on Decline," *Air Force Association Daily Report*, March 15, 2007, at <http://dailyreport.afa.org/AFA/Reports/2007/Month03/Day15/> (May 8, 2007).

30. Bryant Jordan, "U.S. Air Force to Close Battle Labs," *Defense News*, February 23, 2007, at <http://defensenews.com/story.php?F=2572003&C=airwar> (May 16, 2007).

31. Gayle S. Putrich, "USAF Struggles to Replace Aging Aircraft: Age Limits 14% of Fleet," *Defense News*, February 19, 2007.

The Way Ahead

Current Air Force challenges include reducing personnel while simultaneously increasing support for ground forces through airlift and nontraditional deployments and incurring rapidly rising costs for fleet operations while reducing investments in modernization. Operating costs for the Air Force are up 180 percent over the past 10 years, directly stressing the service's ability to recapitalize aircraft. Simultaneously, Air Force investment in modernization has declined by nearly 20 percent over the past 22 years.³³

Congress can help the Air Force—and all the services—to reduce risk and meet both near-term and long-term requirements by fully funding the FY 2008 budget requests. In addition, Congress should pass a budget resolution next year that adds the necessary authority to the five-year national defense account for additional defense spending.

To alleviate immediate pressure, in this year's defense bills, Congress should help the Air Force to:

- **Retire older airplanes.** Maintaining congressionally mandated aircraft, such as older C-5s and KC-130s, costs the Air Force about \$4.6 million every day.³⁴ Congress should approve the Air Force request to retire older airplanes that have “the worst capability rates or structural issues.”³⁵
- **Recapitalize the air fleet.** As aircraft are retired, cockpit and engines in the remaining C-5s and other airframes should be upgraded. This would yield a high return on investment. For example, \$100 million per plane would extend the life of a C-5 by about 25 years.³⁶ Lieutenant General Donald Hoffman testified before Congress that the Air Force would like permission to manage its

fleet, emphasizing that restrictions on fleet moves and maintenance are hurting the service.³⁷

- **Recover funding spent on current operations.** The U.S. Air Force, along with the U.S. Navy, has reprogrammed large amounts of money to help to fund current Army and Marine Corps operations. Most recently, the Pentagon requested permission to transfer \$1.6 billion from Navy and Air Force personnel accounts to pay for the Army's pressing operational needs overseas.³⁸ Congress should quickly pass emergency supplemental funding to reimburse the Air Force and Navy.
- **Responsibly reduce manpower.** Once Air Force leaders conclude the review of personnel needs for expanding airlift and other missions, Congress should support the likely changes, including by not reducing Air Force ranks as much as originally planned. The Air Force will also likely require additional funding—supplemental or otherwise—that Congress should provide so that it can meet all of the service's immediate requirements.

Conclusion

Congress needs to recognize the warning signs of trouble ahead, provide additional funding now, and sustain robust defense budgets well into the future that place equal emphasis on personnel, modernization, and procurement. Today's Air Force is not hollow, but it could become so in less than a decade if funding is not adequate or if the Air Force is forced to cede more of its internal budget share to the Army.³⁹

All this has caused some to ask whether the Air Force is near its breaking point. Members of Con-

32. John T. Bennett, “China, Iran Top USAF's Threat List: Anti-Terror Effort Takes Backseat in Procurement Priorities.”

33. Faykes, “FY08 President's Budget,” p. 14.

34. Michael Bruno, “Air Force Leaders Argue Against Reducing Personnel,” *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, February 13, 2007.

35. Bruce Rolfsen, “USAF to Limit Cut in Flight Training Hours,” *Defense News*, March 26, 2007.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Gayle S. Putrich, “USAF Asks House Lawmakers to Lift Fleet-Management Rules,” *Defense News*, March 12, 2007.

38. Megan Scully, “Chief Says Air Force Must Recover Funds Diverted to Army,” *CongressDaily PM*, April 24, 2007.

39. Carafano, “More Signs of a Future Hollow Force?”

gress have increasingly sounded a readiness alarm, citing classified briefings that are providing insight into the problems that underfunding has caused. This only highlights the need for Congress to provide adequate funding.⁴⁰ While funding for overall operations and support activities continues to rise as an overall share of the Department of Defense budget, spending on modernization—the sum of the research and development account and the procurement account—has fallen.⁴¹

General Moseley recently estimated that the Air Force needs an additional \$20 billion annually to repair and replace aging aircraft:

[He] emphasized that modern air and sea power, which have taken a back seat to ground forces during the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, are crucial to dissuading and deterring worldwide threats, stating [that] “If you don’t have that [air and sea power], then you become a junior varsity. So the United States military in today’s world [has] to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time.”⁴²

General Moseley has also clearly stated that there needs to be a national debate about robust and sustained defense spending and that “It may be time to

have a discussion about what percentage of [gross domestic product] is needed for defense.”⁴³

When the services must choose between equally important priorities to pay for short-term operations, the nation is not spending enough on defense. Greater investment is required today to ensure air and space dominance tomorrow. Despite intense military activity since 9/11, defense spending is at a historical low and has been for too long.

The Administration and Congress should commit now to spending 4 percent of gross domestic product on national defense annually, even after any drawdown of U.S. forces in Afghanistan or Iraq. This level of spending is needed both to prevent a recurrence of the “hollow force” and to meet the military’s immediate modernization needs.⁴⁴ The Administration and Congress should provide defense budgets that are adequate to meet all critical military requirements and stop forcing the services to make dangerous tradeoffs.

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40. Neil Abercrombie and Solomon Ortiz, “How to Fuel Up the Out-of-Gas U.S. Military Machine,” op-ed, *Christian Science Monitor*, March 19, 2007, at www.csmonitor.com/2007/0319/p09s01-coop.htm (May 16, 2007).

41. Baker Spring, “Defense FY 2008 Budget Analysis: Four Percent for Freedom,” Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 2012, March 5, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/upload/bg_2012.pdf.

42. Megan Scully, “Chief Says Air Force Must Recover Funds Diverted to Army.”

43. Bob Cox, “Tanker No. 1 Need, Chief Says,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, February 24, 2007.

44. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., Baker Spring, and Mackenzie M. Eaglen, “Four Percent for Freedom: Maintaining Robust National Security Spending,” *Executive Memorandum* No. 1023, April 10, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/upload/em_1023.pdf.