



Policy Letter

Digest

U.S. AIR FORCE

News and Issues from Headquarters U.S. Air Force

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Senate confirms Jumper as next chief of staff

The Senate confirmed Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Combat Command commander, Aug. 3 to be the Air Force's next chief of staff. General Jumper was nominated by the president in July to succeed Gen. Michael E. Ryan who retires in September.

The Paris, Texas, native answered questions on a variety of subjects during his confirmation hearing, ranging from upgrades of the B-2 bomber to use of GI Bill educational benefits by Air Force family members.

The general said his priorities for the force in the coming years would mirror those of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of the Air Force James Roche.

"I intend to follow the objectives put forth by Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary Roche that include transformation, readiness, retention and recapitalization," he said.

"Transformation is, and always will be, a key issue because the Air Force is inherently transformational — constantly adapting ourselves to new threats and leveraging new technology in

order to posture ourselves to face the challenges of an uncertain future," he said. "Our greatest challenge remains the requirement to advance new capabilities while maintaining the robust readiness required to meet day-to-day warfighter requirements.

"It is imperative we develop our Global Strike Task Force, a kick-down-the-door force that will assure access and aerospace dominance for all our joint forces."

Along those lines, the general said readiness — being ready to kick down the door if and when the requirement comes to do so — is critical to any combat force.

"Readiness is the heart and soul of our ability to perform our mission on a day-to-day basis, and is the hallmark of our combat capability," he said.

Unfortunately, he added, the readiness of

today's force has declined from previous levels.

"Our overall Air Force readiness is lower than any time since June 1987. We are capable of winning today, but we're concerned about trends in readiness indicators such as aging aircraft, constrained resources and parts, and retention."

Improved retention rates, said General Jumper, are key to the future of the Air Force.

"People are our most vital resource," he said. "We can only be successful through the energy and dedication of skilled and motivated personnel."

The general said today's airmen, particularly second-term and career airmen, have been over-tasked for a number of years.

"These airmen are the backbone of our enlisted force," he said.

"People are our most vital resource. We can only be successful through the energy and dedication of skilled and motivated personnel."

Gen. John P. Jumper

"They endure the increased load of having to train our new accessions plus carry out the day-to-day work required of experienced technicians," he said.

A number of factors contribute to that burden, and if confirmed, the general said, those factors will be directly addressed.

"Wages, the high-operations tempo, quality-of-life issues and leadership are key issues our people consider when making the decision to reenlist," he said. "In addition, more must be done to improve not only quality of life for airmen, but also quality of service.

This is why recapitalization is also a key issue to today's Air Force, General Jumper said.

"Quality-of-life issues are terribly important to attract and retain great people, but so is quality of service," he said.

"Quality of service addresses the need to ensure we give our airmen the proper tools to do the tough jobs we ask them to do," said General Jumper. "We must recover from a decade-long spending hiatus to provide the tools our airmen need to fly, fight and win. Therefore, I will ensure an effective balance between quality of life and modernization spending is maintained."

Officials seek \$80.5 billion in 2002 budget

Defense officials recently released their proposed \$329.9 billion budget for fiscal 2002, with \$80.5 billion requested for Air Force-specific programs.

The Department of Defense budget, the largest since the mid-1980s, targets pay, housing expenses, infrastructure, military health care, facilities and processes.

According to Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Dov Zakheim, the DOD budget is broken up as follows: procurement, \$61.6 billion; operations and maintenance, \$125.7 billion; research and development, \$47.4 billion; military personnel, \$82.3 billion; and other, \$10.6 billion.

The budget gives service members a minimum 5-percent pay raise, with targeted pay raises up to 10 percent for middle grades. Civilian pay raises are set for 3.6 percent, with targeted pay raises in critical skills, such as air traffic controllers. Out-of-pocket expenses for people living off base will be reduced to 11.3 percent and, according to Mr. Zakheim, will be eliminated by fiscal 2005.

Much of the Air Force budget is dedicated to human resources and recruiting and retention, said Maj. Gen. Larry Northington, Air Force deputy assistant secretary for budget. "The Air Force is a retention service, and maintaining those field technicians is awfully important to us."

The Air Force is trying to maintain its experienced people, targeting midlevel and senior noncommissioned officers, as well as midgrade officers, said General Northington. "We put a substantial amount of money in bonuses and special pays, maintaining the enlistment bonus to attract folks in and, in many cases, expanding the reenlistment bonuses to keep them in."

Other highlights of the Air Force budget include:

- Increased military construction, with 60 percent mission focused, 18 percent support related, and 22 percent dealing with quality-of-life issues;

- Sustaining current modernization programs, including revitalizing 2,189 military family housing units;

- Addressing degraded facilities; and

- Modifying, upgrading and improving reliability of aircraft, such as updating F-16 avionics and weapons delivery and improving E-3 radar systems.

It is important to defense officials that military people are treated in a way they deserve to be treated, said Mr. Zakheim. "They're the ones out there. They're the ones risking their lives for us. Clearly, we can't play any games or take any risks with morale; it's as simple as that."

Information managers keep pace with technology

The Air Force of the 21st century is fueled on and powered by information, its associated technology, and the knowledge and experience to master both.

This critical relationship is nowhere more readily apparent than in Air Force Vision 2020 which acknowledges information superiority as a core Air Force competency. People in Air Force Specialty Code 3A0X1, more commonly known as information managers, are responsible for the effective and efficient management of this information.

"At the dawning of the 21st century, it is critical that we move swiftly to keep this career field in stride with the explosive growth in technology which has completely altered the information management landscape," said Lt. Gen. John Woodward, Air Force deputy chief of staff for communications and information.

While some may see this as a radical change to the information manager's role it is actually a logical evolution which started more than a decade ago, said Chief Master Sgt. Todd Small, Air Force career field manager for information managers. "Changing the career field title from administration to information management in the late 1980s was an indicator of sweeping changes for the career field," said Chief Small.

Another important milestone in this transition was in 1996 when the Air Staff directed the integration of communications-computer systems and information management to form a single communications and information functional community. "Air Force senior leaders clearly recognized that information systems technology was central to the effective management of information," said Chief Small.

That change resulted in information managers adding workgroup management as a central responsibility. Workgroup management includes tasks such as Web development and management, personal computer software and hardware installation, configuration and control.

In the past, information managers used typewriters, stand-alone word processors, manual mail systems and filing, storage and retrieval systems. "Computers are simply a new tool or, better yet, a new weapon system in the arsenal of the information manager," said Chief Small.

The Air Force still needs information managers who possess knowledge of records, administrative communications, publications and forms. "Knowledge of these functions is fundamental to the management of information,

be it paper- or electron-based, throughout its life cycle,” said Chief Small. He added, “It’s not as though we’re starting with a clean slate....we are simply going to leverage the good from the past with the good from today. We are going to create an Air Force specialty code skilled at managing a broad range of information resources by coupling the structure and discipline long associated with information management processes to the tremendous computing power of today’s information systems.”

Another battle faced by information managers is keeping pace with the changing technology used to manage information. Unfortunately, status quo will never be good enough because technology continues to create better methods of managing information, according to Chief Small. “The Air Force Portal, electronic records management, and electronic workflow and staffing significantly change how information is controlled. This evolution will continue as these new emerging technologies are developed and adopted,” he said.

During the past several years, training for information managers has changed dramatically to keep up with the changing technology. “For example, our 3-level course migrated from a 19-day self-paced course to 37 days of instructor-led

instruction focused on the information life cycle and the technologically based tools used to manage that life cycle,” Chief Small said.

Keeping training on pace with technology changes isn’t easy because of the speed in which technology changes.

“Despite this training challenge, I’m convinced today’s information managers are better trained and more qualified than in the past to provide our customers the expertise and guidance to organize, integrate, and handle information as a critical national resource to achieve the Air Force mission,” said Chief Small.

The key to this effort is correct use of information managers. “Commanders and supervisors must exploit the expanded capability of the information management career field and use these people to improve and streamline the management and processing of information and control of information resources,” said General Woodward.

Both General Woodward and Chief Small emphasize the need for commanders and supervisors to maintain close contact with the information management functional managers at their base or headquarters to stay abreast of the rapid changes facing the career field.

New survey gives leadership daily pulse of force

In the past, Air Force-wide equal opportunity climate surveys cost millions of dollars and oftentimes took years for results to be released. Beginning this fall, all that will change.

“A real-time equal opportunity unit climate assessment will be available Oct. 1,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Driscoll, military equal opportunity chief at the Pentagon.

Surveys can be routine or directed, and will be given every time there is a change of command, a problem within a unit, or whenever a commander wants to know what people in the unit think.

The program was developed to cut down on cost and time, and to provide commanders at all levels — unit, wing, major command and headquarters — with a timely tool to routinely check the pulse of the force.

The survey offers a standard set of 39 questions with additional locally developed questions available to unit commanders. It addresses a wide range of topics including job satisfaction, peer relationships, unit leadership, communication, sexual harassment and discrimination. This data can be rolled up by wing, base, major command and overall Air Force climate data results. As data rolls up, any subordinate-level command identification is purged.

Commanders may add up to 10 questions to find out anything they want to know, Colonel Driscoll said. For example, if they want to know how people feel about retention or suicide prevention, all they have to do is add a question regarding those issues and the military equal opportunity people at the base will add them to the database for that unit.

At a minimum, surveys will be given at each unit every two years. Essentially, Colonel Driscoll said, half of the force will have an opportunity to participate each year. Unlike past Department of Defense equal opportunity or service surveys, where results were released later, this Web-based survey will have immediate results. Because the survey is computer-based and prompts the respondent, there is little room for human database entry errors.

In the past, surveys were very labor intensive and time consuming, Colonel Driscoll said. The new survey will cut base-level administration by 60 percent, while giving unit commanders a timely and consistent product.

“It’s real-time information to leadership of how the climate (of the Air Force) is,” he said.

To access the survey, people will log onto a secure server with a one-time user password.

These passwords are randomly generated and assigned, but are survey specific. The survey can be accessed from any computer, anywhere in the world, and is 100-percent confidential.

Unlike past surveys, Colonel Driscoll said this survey also clarifies who a certain question is about. Prior surveys would ask questions about commanders or first sergeants, which oftentimes confused people.

“Sometimes a commander had just arrived and people didn’t know if they should answer the question about the old commander or the new commander,” he said. “The new survey provides the name of the person referred to in the question.”

Results can be broken down by Air Force specialty code, rank, race, gender and unit type. It’s also broken down further to include military, as well as civilians, local nationals, contractors and nonappropriated-fund employees.

“This is a powerful tool,” Colonel Driscoll said. “For example, if we wanted more information on why a selected career field is having retention problems, we can pull the data by AFSC and provide that information to the personnel managers.”

The survey could still be completed by hand for those without computer availability, Colonel Driscoll said.

Officials seek feedback on civilian leadership development

Obtaining feedback on civilian leadership development initiatives was the focus of a recent town hall meeting at Langley Air Force Base, Va., under the direction of the Air Force Executive Resources Board Development Panel.

The panel, made up of senior executive service officials and general officers, are visiting eight other military installations.

Specific targets are initiatives related to improving leadership development as outlined in the Air Force Civilian Leadership Development Plan.

The plan provides a strategy for civilian leadership development and sustainment that is responsive to corporate Air Force needs, said Roger Blanchard, Air Force assistant deputy chief of staff for personnel, and co-chair of the panel.

“It’s great to come to the field to get direct feedback from our civilians who are fulfilling the mission on a daily basis,” Mr. Blanchard said. “We need to know if our efforts are on target or (if) midcourse correction is needed.”

“Our objective is to have the data gathered and analyzed in time for the upcoming ERB Development Panel offsite, where the main agenda

item will be to review the AFCLD Plan,” Mr. Blanchard said. “Initiatives in the current AFCLD Plan have already led to increased funding for leadership development, and doubled the number of the centrally managed intern program, the feeder group for future leaders.”

Mr. Blanchard was accompanied by an Air Force civilian personnel team, which shared legislative initiatives with selected groups to develop new ideas.

Customer feedback via focus group meetings and surveys are paramount to being successful, said Sharon Seymour, director of civilian personnel for Air Combat Command.

“We need to think outside the box on how to hire and retain a quality civil service force,” she said. “For the Air Force to be successful in the future, the civilian personnel management system must be responsive in meeting demands levied by the mission.”

Similar town hall meetings are scheduled at Kirtland AFB, N.M.; MacDill AFB, Fla.; Peterson AFB, Colo.; Robins AFB, Ga.; Scott AFB, Ill.; Randolph AFB, Texas; Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; and the Pentagon.

Opportunities available for officers to expand global skills

With the Air Force now an expeditionary aerospace force, officers are encouraged to expand their global skills, allowing more effective communication with other cultures.

“Today’s Air Force officers need to be globally aware and possess global skills of language, academics and practical experience with another culture,” said Col. Anthony Aldwell, chief, international airman division.

Currently, only 5 percent of Air Force officers are identified as foreign language proficient. While learning an additional language is not a requirement, Colonel Aldwell said, participation in the foreign

area officer branch-sponsored programs is encouraged for all line officers. The Air Force has a goal set for 2005 — foreign-language proficiency for 10 percent of its officers.

The biggest advantage of these programs is that when the Air Force deploys, it will have regional experts and linguistically talented officers to better facilitate the deployment process, Colonel Aldwell said.

Although regional expertise of language requires time and dedication, the Air Force has established programs to make it easier and more cost-effective for officers wishing to pursue

foreign area and language studies.

Programs available supporting the global expeditionary airman concept include:

- Tuition assistance for a second graduate degree in foreign area studies;
- Tuition assistance for foreign language studies (not necessarily a degree);
- Five-year scholarship funding for ROTC double majors, with one in foreign language study;
- Air Force Institute of Technology-funded advance academic degree programs;
- Language and Area Studies Immersion, or LASI;
- Area Studies Advanced Program; and
- Various Air Force Special Operations School regional orientation courses.

“Officers who already possess limited proficiency in a foreign language, with a minimum Defense Language Proficiency Test score of 1/1, can improve their proficiency in 39 different languages through the LASI program,” Colonel Aldwell said. “They can apply to study in 41 locations. While language is not at the top of the list (of Air Force priorities), it’s now on the list. Language skills are important to the Air Force,” he said.

Heritage speakers are also encouraged to

expand their global skills with these programs, Colonel Aldwell said.

Officers proficient in a foreign language are eligible for foreign language proficiency pay of \$50 to \$300 per month. Proficiency level and the number of languages maintained by the officer determine the amount.

Colonel Aldwell said there is a critical need for more Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Serbo-Croatian speakers.

“Remarkably, we still need more Spanish speakers,” he said.

Through the foreign area officer branch, officers are provided with the training opportunities to gain more global skills, allowing them to be more effective when deployed or working with allies and coalition partners.

This program will provide the Air Force with “officers who are much more plugged into the world,” he said.

Not all officers are expected to be foreign area officers, but the language programs are open to all officers.

For more information, contact Master Sgt. Stephen Taylor at DSN 425-8348 or commercial at (703) 588-8348 or check out the division’s Web site at www.safia.hq.af.mil/afao/fao/index.htm.

Society offers help to families

While on active duty as the deputy chief of staff for personnel in Washington, he served on the board of trustees for the Air Force Aid Society. Now, retired Lt. Gen. Mike McGinty is back as the chief executive officer.

In his new job, General McGinty said he plans to focus on helping Air Force people and their families — wherever, whenever and however that help is needed.

Gen. Hap Arnold founded the society in 1942. Its mission was to take care of the families of Army Air Corps members. Last year, about 30,000 Air Force people and their families were helped with nearly \$24 million.

Assistance is provided in emergency grants and loans with zero interest; community enhancement programs to improve quality of life on Air Force bases; and education programs.

Providing emergency assistance is “job one” for the society, General McGinty said.

More than 15,000 people found that out firsthand in 2000.

They received aid for emergencies ranging from funeral expenses, to basic living, to vehicle expenses.

Community enhancement programs include providing free childcare for volunteers, families

making a permanent change of station and stress-relief for parents under the Give Parents a Break program.

Other programs include:

- Car Care Because We Care provides preventive vehicle maintenance inspections;
- Bundles for Babies provides baby gifts to new and expectant mothers;
- Nursing Moms provides assistance in breast pump rentals and purchases;
- Wellness provides enhancements to first-time parents programs;
- Phone Home gives people deployed 30 days or longer a prepaid \$20 phone card; and
- Youth Employment Skills provides education and base community dollar credits for high school students who volunteer on base.

In 2000, 5,000 grants for \$1,500 each were awarded to children and spouses to assist with education costs. Another 3,550 spouses were assisted overseas with tuition assistance. Money is also available to spouses for short-term job training.

Fifty-eight percent of people who applied for education assistance in 2000 received help, General McGinty said.

Another goal General McGinty has is to

strengthen the partnership between the Air Force Aid Society and the family support network.

“We are totally dependent on the great assistance family support provides to our programs,” he said. “And, when both organizations work well together, the synergism provides the best possible support to the troops and their families.

“Our programs get people involved,” General McGinty said. “They pull families, young people and kids, into the family support center.”

But, AFAS is not just focused on the active force, General McGinty said. It also wants to help the retired, Guard and Reserve communities.

“They are all important members of the Air Force family and are providing record levels of support to the active force,” he said. “We need to ensure we are helping the rest of the Air Force family.”

For more information on the Air Force Aid Society or its programs, contact local chapters or check out the society’s Web site at www.afas.org.



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QUOTABLE QUOTE

“The 2002 budget does a lot to help us get well in maintenance and people-related things, but it doesn’t do all that we need. We can’t live with the procurement holiday in airplanes that has existed for the last eight or so years, where we’ve just had insufficient purchase of airplanes. Our planes age increasingly. The cost — the time to put a tanker through a logistics center now is over a year because these planes are failing in ways that we didn’t anticipate, because they’re just getting old. So we will need more money.”

Dr. James G. Roche, secretary of the Air Force

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