



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



DEC 11 2013

To the Airmen of the United States Air Force:

We are the best Air Force in the world because we attract, recruit, develop and retain Airmen with the strongest character and commitment to our core values. Even though we just finished over a decade of extended combat operations, retention in our Air Force remains at an all-time high. While this is a testament to the selfless service of all members of our Air Force family, we are now faced with some very difficult financial choices that force us to reduce the overall size of the Air Force. To be blunt, we are going to get smaller...smaller than we've ever been as an Air Force. Over the next few years, we may have to reduce our force by approximately 25,000 Airmen and as many as 550 aircraft if we do not receive any budget relief.

Our biggest challenge will be to make sure we keep the skilled Airmen who are needed to meet the Air Force's core mission requirements. To do this, we will implement a number of force management programs to reduce the number of Airmen while maintaining our combat capability. It is always our goal to make these reductions through voluntary separations and retirements. Unfortunately, we will likely have to use involuntary measures as well. Beginning very soon, you'll see programs we've used before to include voluntary separation incentives and temporary early retirement authority, as well as force shaping and reduction in force boards. You'll also see new programs to include an enhanced selective early retirement board, enlisted retention boards, and an enlisted quality force review board. Although these programs will be explained in detail when announced, you can go to the myPers website for the most current information today (<https://mypers.af.mil>).

We know these programs will be unsettling to many Airmen and their families, but they are necessary to ensure that our Air Force remains the best in the world. We've decided to roll these force management tools out now to give you plenty of time to understand your options. We promise to do our best to be transparent and give you all the information that you need to make decisions affecting you and your loved ones. Whether you choose to separate or are asked to separate, we are committed to doing everything that we can to help you and your family in your transition.

Handwritten signature of Eric K. Fanning in black ink.

Eric K. Fanning
Acting Secretary of the Air Force

Handwritten signature of Mark A. Welsh III in black ink.

Mark A. Welsh III
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Handwritten signature of James A. Cody in black ink.

James A. Cody
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force