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Assessment of Air Force Global Strike Command Organizational Structures, Roles and Responsibilities

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Additional Information

The Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Inspector General for Intelligence and Special Program Assessments, prepared this report. Questions regarding this report should be directed to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Intelligence Audits at (703) 882-4860, or fax (571) 372-7451.

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ODIG-ISPA
Department of Defense Inspector General
4800 Mark Center Drive, Room 10J25
Arlington, VA 22202-4704



Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFB	Air Force Base
AFGSC	Air Force Global Strike Command
NAF	Numbered Air Force
TF	Task Force
USSTRATCOM	US Strategic Command



MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND
COMMANDER, AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND

Subject: Assessment of Air Force Global Strike Command - Organizational Structures,
Roles and Responsibilities (Project No: D2012-DINT02-0104.000)

This report summarizes our review of the command relationships of Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) and its subordinate organizations. Our objective was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of current command relationships. To achieve this objective, we interviewed US Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) staff, and leaders at AFGSC. Additionally, we interviewed leaders assigned to the 8th Air Force (8 AF) and the 20th Air Force (20 AF) - hereafter referred to as Numbered Air Forces¹ (NAF) - that report to AFGSC, as well as personnel assigned to two wings at Minot Air Force Base (one wing is assigned to each NAF). We also examined potential efficiencies and security advantages derived from alternative organizational structures at Minot AFB.

Results

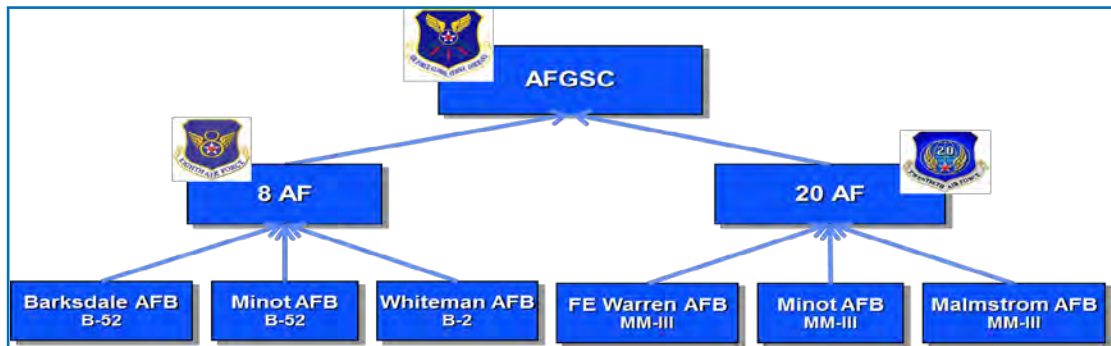
We determined that AFGSC took a proactive role with regard to enhancing the Air Force's nuclear enterprise focus prior to initiation of our assessment. Resultantly, the Air Force has reduced manning at the NAFs while increasing their relevance. We identified manpower and command and control improvements that could potentially be utilized at Minot AFB to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Comparable efficiencies will likely be realized via initiatives undertaken by AFGSC prior to commencement of our review.

Background

AFGSC was activated on August 7, 2009, in conjunction with an overarching effort to reinvigorate the nuclear enterprise after the inadvertent transfer of nuclear weapons by means of a B-52 aircraft in 2007, and an accidental shipment of nuclear weapon components to Taiwan discovered in 2008. AFGSC's mission is to develop and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations. AFGSC is responsible for overseeing three intercontinental ballistic missile wings, two B-52 wings, and one B-2 wing. On December 1, 2009, AFGSC assumed responsibility for the service's Minuteman III missile wings from Air Force Space Command. On February 1, 2010, nuclear-capable bombers from Air Combat Command were placed under AFGSC. At present, five air force bases (AFB) are assigned to AFGSC: Barksdale AFB, Minot AFB, Whiteman AFB, Francis E. Warren AFB, and Malmstrom AFB. Figure 1 on the following page depicts AFGSC's organizational structure.

¹ As outlined in AFI 38-101, a Numbered Air Force is a level of command directly under a Major Command (MAJCOM) and assigned subordinate units such as wings, squadrons, and groups. NAFs provide operational leadership and supervision.

Figure 1. Air Force Global Strike Command Organizational Structure



AFGSC and NAF Evolution

Subsequent to nuclear incidents in 2007 and 2008, AFGSC and its two NAFs have streamlined responsibilities and increased effectiveness. The standup of AFGSC, which focuses solely on the missions of 8 AF and 20 AF, has provided the Air Force with support required to proactively improve the nuclear enterprise. Consequently, the wings assigned to AFGSC have benefited from increased support at both the NAF and major command levels despite significant staffing reductions.

Initiatives undertaken by NAFs since 2007 have enhanced their relevance. Examples include assuming intelligence and personnel assistance functions in an effort to reverse the decline of the nuclear enterprise. 20 AF increased its security force staff, and assigned intelligence officers to intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) wings. Personnel specialists at both NAFs work closely with commanders to improve processes utilized to fill key nuclear billets, and engage in long-term planning designed to ensure adequate expertise will be available in the future.

AFGSC and NAF Division of Responsibilities. As entities that report directly to the Major Command, NAFs focus on ensuring readiness of assigned forces. 20 AF is responsible for operating and maintaining ICBMs, while 8 AF controls nuclear-capable bombers. NAFs manage Uniform Code of Military Justice actions, mentor wing commanders and their staffs, address personnel and manning issues, and prepare performance reports and promotion recommendations. AFGSC also relies on the NAFs to manage certain technical oversight functions in conjunction with the wings. Duties include standardization, evaluation, exercise planning and analysis, technical order support, and long-term modification planning.

AFGSC retains control over certain functional areas, such as communications, analysis, and civil engineering. To clarify responsibilities, the AFGSC Director of Staff has issued explicit directions as to which actions should be staffed through the NAFs, and circumstances in which direct interaction between AFGSC and the wings is appropriate.

To ensure senior staff at AFGSC is adequately engaged in issues of relevance to the nuclear enterprise, AFGSC conducts periodic meetings, to include Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) reviews, inspection deficiency reviews, and weapon system team conferences. B-52, B-2 and Minuteman III weapons teams coordinate on a regular basis with AFGSC and applicable NAF and wing leadership (in person or via video teleconference). AFGSC ensures that wing representatives are provided with

ample opportunities to raise concerns. AFGSC subsequently addresses concerns in conjunction with the appropriate NAF. At Minot AFB, personnel believe that reporting to a single major command enhances communication between wings, and alleviates perceptions regarding competing priorities of Air Combat Command and Air Force Space Command.

AFGSC and NAF Optimization. The DoD Inspector General assessment team reviewed the organize, train, and equip missions for AFGSC and both NAFs to identify potential duplication of effort. The team noted that responsibilities common to both NAFs are typically assumed by AFGSC. The team also noted that AFGSC previously determined that combining NAFs could potentially allow the command to better utilize personnel and eliminate 42 billets (in addition to previously directed reductions); however, Air Force senior leadership opted to retain the organizational structure, but still elected to eliminate 42 billets. Downsizing will be completed in FY 2015. Concurrently, AFGSC is downsizing from a maximum authorized strength of 1079 personnel to 975 by the first quarter of FY 2013. We noted several instances whereby the Air Force's reduction mitigation strategy involves transferring responsibilities between the NAFs and AFGSC. Communication and coordination between AFGSC and NAFs will be critical to the success of this endeavor. Inadequate communication regarding future expectations could potentially result in a diminished ability on the part of AFGSC and/or the NAFs to meet their responsibilities.

Another concern of the assessment team involves the extent to which 8AF utilizes staff to augment other organizations, many of which are in the process of downsizing. The 608 Air and Space Operations Center (608 AOC) will reduce from 169 personnel in FY 2011 to 127 by FY 2015 (25% reduction). During the same timeframe, the 608th Air Communications Squadron will eliminate 24 billets (27% reduction), and the headquarters staff (A1-A9 and the Commander's special staff) will decrease from 174 personnel to 94 (46% reduction). This will result in a staffing level below the 99 person threshold established for non-Combatant Command (COCOM) supporting NAFs, as referenced in Air Force Instruction 38-101 (since 8 AF and 20 AF are designated as USSTRACOM component NAFs, they are permitted to employ larger staffs so as to ensure they remain capable of performing strategic, operational and tactical level functions). Given the combined impact of manpower reductions and a continued need to deploy staff to support contingencies, the NAFs must vigilantly manage resources in a manner that ensures they remain capable of meeting critical nuclear responsibilities.

Organizational Structure Supporting USSTRATCOM

Commanders of 20 AF and 8 AF report directly to the Commander, AFGSC, who in turn reports to USSTRATCOM; however, USSTRATCOM has also designated 8 AF and 20 AF commanders as nuclear task force commanders for the bomber and missile legs of the triad. A total of six nuclear task forces manage all of the aircraft, ICBMs and submarines associated with USSTRATCOM's nuclear mission. While serving as nuclear task force commanders, 20 AF and 8 AF commanders report directly to USSTRATCOM.

Presidential direction is transmitted directly to nuclear forces, bypassing task force headquarters. Previously, missile and aircraft crews placed on alert were the only wing personnel that reported to USSTRATCOM; however, USSTRATCOM has operationalized the task forces, thus making them more relevant. Currently, task forces are tasked with supporting nuclear weapon system daily readiness and functionality. USSTRATCOM created operational order *Global Citadel*, which codifies task force responsibilities. Task force commanders utilize direction provided via *Global Citadel* to produce specific operational orders. These operational orders are distinct from traditional

NAF instructions. Additionally, USSTRATCOM is considering force allocation modifications that will potentially result in additional personnel being assigned to support its nuclear mission, and prevent mission essential forces from being deployed in support of another COCOM's mission without USSTRATCOM coordination and acceptance of risk.

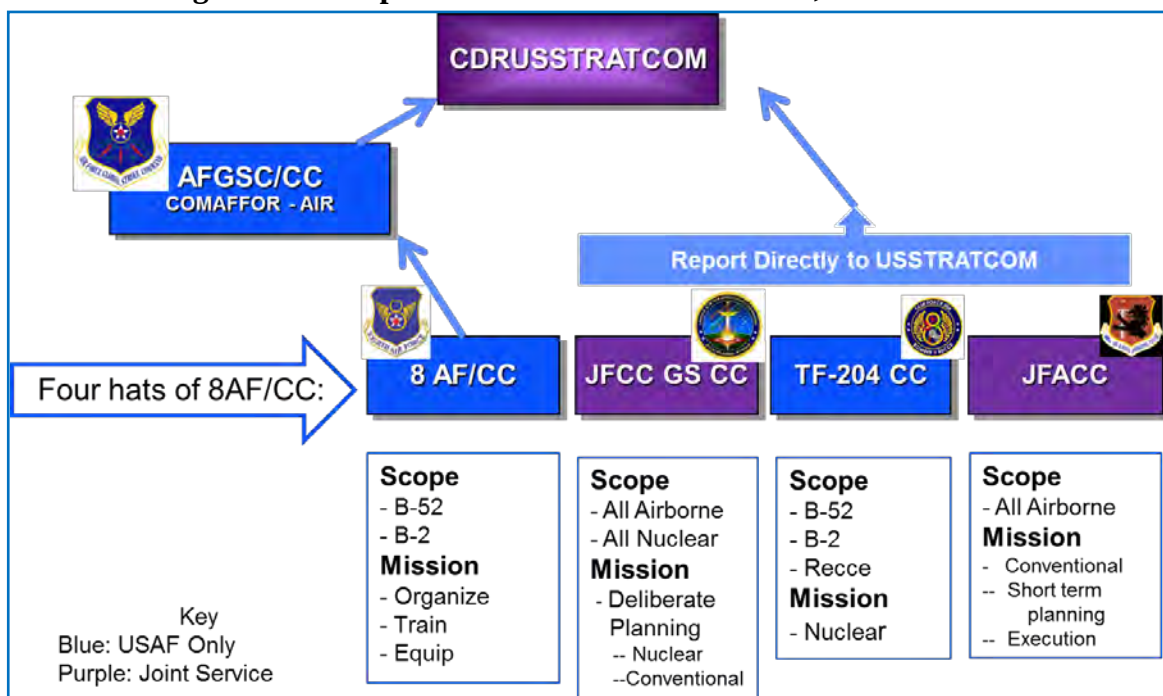
20 AF Commander Appointed Task Force 214 Commander by USSTRATCOM.

The 20 AF Commander has been appointed by the Commander, USSTRATCOM, to serve as Task Force 214 (TF-214) Commander. Whereas 20 AF's primary mission is to support the AFGSC mission to organize, train, and equip, TF-214 is responsible for tactical management of ICBM forces. TF-214 reports directly to USSTRATCOM, and executes tactical control over assigned forces via a TF-214 Operations Order. Tasks include warhead management, targeting validation, and missile alert balance between the three bases. These tasks are accomplished by the same personnel who execute 20 AF functions.

8 AF Commander Appointed Tasks by USSTRATCOM.

The 8 AF Commander has been appointed by the Commander, USSTRATCOM, to serve as Joint Force Component Commander – Global Strike; Task Force 204 Commander; and Joint Forces Air Component Commander. Responsibilities of these three entities include deliberate and crisis planning of both nuclear and conventional missions for bomber and reconnaissance aircraft. Responsibilities are divided among these three distinct organizations. Figure 2 depicts the reporting structure for 8 AF to both AFGSC and USSTRATCOM.

Figure 2. Multiple Commands for Commander, 8th Air Force



Joint Force Component Commander – Global Strike (JFCC-GS). JFCC-GS performs traditional USSTRATCOM J3-type roles related to deliberate planning for nuclear options, as well as airborne conventional options. Planning responsibilities include all preplanned nuclear options for Navy and Air Force assets. JFCC-GS staff resides at USSTRATCOM headquarters at Offutt AFB.

Day-to-day management is the responsibility of a Navy Rear Admiral, designated as the deputy commander for JFCC-GS.

Task Force 204 (TF-204). Core functions of TF-204 include force generation, mission validation, force and weapons tracking, and stockpile monitoring for the nuclear related generation of AFGSC assets and Air Combat Command reconnaissance aircraft that support nuclear operations. The 8 AF Commander has designated his A3 (operations) Director as the TF-204 Director, ensuring close coordination between 8 AF staff and TF-204 staff. Fifty four of the 68 billets assigned to the 608 Strategic Operations Squadron support TF-204's mission. The 608 Strategic Operations Squadron also reports to AFGSC through 8 AF when executing its mission to organize, train, and equip the task force.

Joint Forces Air Component Commander – (JFACC). JFACC is the most recent duty title assigned the 8 AF commander. JFACC commands the 608 AOC, which has been in existence since 1994.[†] The 608 AOC is a separate organization within 8 AF that provides air support for geographic Combatant Commands on behalf of USSTRATCOM. It also monitors air assets assigned to USSTRATCOM, and is responsible for short term or "crisis action" planning for USSTRATCOM conventional global strike missions. Although the 608 AOC does not engage in daily combat sorties, it executes its responsibilities on a daily basis, ensuring a highly proficient staff is available to participate in contingency missions. In addition to planning and executing conventional bomber operations (e.g., recent actions in Libya), JFACC monitors and controls exercises, and engages in humanitarian relief operations (e.g., the Haiti earthquake, and the British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico).

Co-location of Task Force 204 with the 608 Air and Space Operations Center. USSTRATCOM has identified direct linkages and dependencies between TF-204 and the 608 AOC. Accordingly, operation centers for TF-204 and 608 AOC will be relocated to a common site. This will enable TF-204 and 608 AOC to seamlessly execute any USSTRATCOM Global Strike requirements, and to provide a common air picture to USSTRATCOM.

Minot AFB Organizational Structure Options for Security.

Minot AFB is unique in that it hosts two separate wings. Our review noted that the 5th Bomb Wing (5 BW) is the host wing and provides base security, but the preponderance of security forces belong to the 91st Missile Wing (91 MW), a tenant unit at Minot AFB. 91 MW is responsible for the protection of ICBMs located throughout the missile complex. We believe this unique structure can negatively impact unity of command and results in structural inefficiencies. In a crisis situation, one of the two separate backup forces would be utilized. Separate security command centers and wing crisis actions centers may impede an efficient coordinated response if a crisis involves responsibilities belonging to both wings.

AFGSC Staff Proposal to Reorganize. A series of organizational changes that occurred subsequent to disestablishment of Strategic Air Command have resulted in bifurcated security force. One force supports on-base operations, and a second (much larger) force is responsible for security related to the off-base missile field. Citing a desire to obtain

[†] Originally activated as the 608th Air Operations Group on Jan 1, 1994, it was re-designated the 608th Air and Space Operations Center on June 3, 2008.

unity of command for security forces at Minot AFB, AFGSC staff developed a decision brief that examined options that could be utilized to enhance unity. Potential options included: assigning security functions to the bomb wing; placing security under the missile wing as the tenant; placing security under the missile wing as the host for the base; or retaining the current the organizational structure, and creating a memorandum of understanding designed to eliminate certain redundancies.

The AFGSC commander opted to retain the current organizational structure, but elected to co-locate security force command centers and to establish a memorandum of understanding designed to enhance unity and reduce redundancy. A particularly noteworthy efficiency enhancement will be achieved via elimination of a redundant backup force. This reform will assist in alleviating a significant security force shortfall in the missile field (5 BW utilizes a 15 person backup force that is available 24 hours a day; and 91 MW utilizes a Tactical Response Force that is comparable in size). Noteworthy is the fact that a single task force performs both on and off base security functions at Francis E. Warren AFB and Malmstrom AFB.

Additionally, the AFGSC commander has reportedly decided to re-explore the possibility of designating 91 MW as the host wing within two to three years, which would allow Minot to recover from extensive flooding that occurred in summer 2011. In addition to the turmoil caused by the flood, all AFGSC wings recently absorbed munitions squadrons, which were previously tenant units assigned to Air Force Materiel Command. Leadership is making a concerted effort to stabilize the organizational structure prior to exploring any additional changes.

Wing Crisis Action Management Centers. Currently, each wing at Minot AFB utilizes its own operations center. The 5 BW Commander activates his Crisis Action Team (co-located with the 5 BW command post) when specific installation-based incidents occur that require oversight. The 91 MW Commander utilizes the Missile Reaction Cell at 91 MW headquarters to oversee mission operations involving the missile field. Both wings are supported by the 5 BW Mission Support Group and Medical Group. We believe that utilization of a common crisis action center would provide a unified operating perspective during a crisis, and would enhance communication among key personnel.

Security Force Command and Control Locations. Each wing also utilizes its own security control facility. The 5 BW Central Security Control is adjacent to the former Missile Security Control room in the Security Forces Center, which is now designated as the Missile Security Control alternate location. Missile Security Control was relocated to its current site in an attempt to enhance mission effectiveness by co-locating with the Missile Maintenance Operations Center; however, we believe that the ability of base security forces to respond to incidents would be heightened if forces were assigned to a single location, as is the practice at other missile wings. There are obvious advantages associated with co-locating the Missile Maintenance Operations Center and Missile Security Control; however, we suggest a suitable location be found to accommodate Central Security Control, which oversees the weapons storage area and airfield security, as well as the Missile Maintenance Operations Center and Missile Security Control center. Failing to co-locate all three of these centers may negate some of the benefits that could potentially be derived via the previously mentioned Memorandum of Understanding, to include the prospective ability to dispatch a single backup force in an efficient manner.

Other Matters of Interest - Key Nuclear Billets

The Air Force has designated certain positions as *key nuclear billets* that must be filled. Personnel representatives at the offices we visited cited concerns regarding difficulties associated with filling these billets. Some opined that Air Force Personnel Center personnel fail to ensure candidates who possess required nuclear expertise are recruited to fill the billets in their haste to fill the positions. In some instances, billets were reportedly filled by persons lacking any semblance of nuclear expertise. In order to ensure key nuclear billets are filled by qualified personnel, special experience identifiers have been created and attached to particular billets to define job requirements. Personnel records should be consistently populated with these special identifiers as personnel complete relevant assignments. Some individuals are concerned that the Air Force Personnel Center is not utilizing the identifiers. This perception discourages wings from entering special experience identifiers into personnel records. In our opinion, action should be taken to ensure implementation of related procedures so as to ensure personnel records are properly notated, and best qualified individuals are selected to fill key nuclear billets. AFGSC and both NAFs indicated they are coordinating with the wings so as to ensure required information is made available to the Air Force Personnel Center.

Conclusion

Our assessment team determined that both 20 AF and 8 AF have matured significantly since 2007. The standup of AFGSC has apparently resulted in more engaged, proactive institutions. Functions performed by NAFs complement MAJCOM functions, and the MAJCOM has assumed responsibility for potentially duplicative tasks. Consolidating NAFs subsequent to completion of programmed reductions (to include the ongoing NAF optimization plan) is unlikely to result in additional labor efficiencies, and could negatively impact effectiveness if the consolidated organization was unable to adequately identify required expertise.

In order to achieve success in the nuclear arena, USSTRATCOM must rely upon informed experts to provide critical guidance. Currently, NAF commanders (via their role as task force commanders) effectively fill that role. The current organizational structure ensures that general officers remain capable of focusing on each leg of the organizational triad, versus individual functional areas. USSTRATCOM has also modified the manner in which it utilizes its task forces by issuing formal operational orders, and utilizing existing assets in more efficient manners. At present, USSTRATCOM is able to rely upon task forces and wings to support critical functions and to proactively manage the force, which is critical given the number of ICBM warheads impacted by the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

As mentioned above, we are of the opinion certain efficiencies can potentially be gained through relatively minor structural modifications and the refinement of certain administrative processes and procedures; however, we recognize the fact that the AFGSC Commander plans to implement a memorandum of agreement at Minot AFB that accomplishes closely related objectives, to include consolidation of security command centers and establishment of joint training regimens. Implementation of the memorandum of understanding will help ensure a unified response transpires in the event of a serious security incident. Additionally, AFGSC intends to re-examine the possibility of transferring host wing responsibilities to the missile wing in two to three years. It is our opinion that merging security forces into a single organization that reports to Missile Wing leadership could further enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

If you have questions concerning this report, please contact Sean Mitchell, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Intelligence and Special Program Assessments, at 703-882-4706 or via email at Sean.Mitchell@dodig.mil.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J R Ives". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James R. Ives
Acting Deputy Inspector General
for Intelligence and Special
Program Assessments