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Feb. 10, 2011



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AIR FORCE ACADEMY

[Judge dismisses AF Academy prayer lawsuit](#)

Associated Press; Feb. 9, 2010

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Denver Post; Feb. 9, 2010

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[Academy prevails in prayer luncheon case](#)

Colorado Springs Independent; Feb. 9, 2010

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use more care in the future in who sponsors such religious events, according to a plaintiff in the case, AFA economics professor David Mullin.

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TGDaily.com; Feb. 9, 2011

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ACADEMY SPORTS

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Colorado Springs Gazette; Feb. 10, 2011

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DefenseNews.com; Feb. 9, 2011

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

[U.S. commander: Special ops forces 'fraying'](#)

Associated Press; Feb. 8, 2011

WASHINGTON — The elite troops of U.S. special operations forces are showing signs of fraying after nearly 10 years at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, their commander said Tuesday.

[Defense leaders warn of big budget cuts fallout](#)

Associated Press; Feb. 10, 2011

WASHINGTON — Congress' failure to pass a 2011 defense budget bill is jeopardizing the military's effort to send more surveillance and attack drones into Afghanistan, as well as stymieing plans to buy a new Navy submarine, Army combat helicopters and other major weapons systems, defense leaders say.

OPINION

[Dreaming of a future Academy](#)

Colorado Springs Independent; Feb. 10, 2011

Back in the '90s, one sharp-tongued activist characterized our elected leaders as "the rocking-horse Council," going back and forth, quarreling interminably, and never getting anywhere.

Associated Press
Feb. 9, 2010

Judge dismisses AF Academy prayer lawsuit

DENVER — A judge ruled Wednesday an Air Force Academy prayer luncheon can go on as planned, but a chaplain said he would make clear the event is sponsored by his chapel and not the academy — one of the objectives of a lawsuit that sought to block it.

The lawsuit argued the luncheon, scheduled for Thursday, would violate the constitutional separation of church and state because it appeared to be sponsored by the academy and because some faculty feared retribution if they didn't attend, even though the event is officially voluntary.

U.S. District Judge Christine Arguello dismissed the suit, saying neither associate professor of economics David Mullin nor the Military Religious Freedom Foundation had shown the prospect of retribution was real and imminent.

She said the academy had clearly stated to faculty, cadets and staff that the event was voluntary and no one faced reprisals for being a no-show.

She also said government lawyers had shown the chaplains — not academy commanders — were the sponsors, although she said there was “some lack of clarity” in the way the event's sponsorship was described.

She suggested the academy pay more attention to the details of such announcements in the future.

After Arguello announced her decision, Chaplain Dwayne Peoples told reporters he would emphasize at Thursday's lunch that the Community Center Chapel is the sponsor. He said he had planned to do that before the ruling.

“I want the credit,” he joked. “We put it together,” not the academy administration.

Darold Killmer, the attorney for Killmer and the foundation, said that was a victory.

“That was the goal of this case,” he said. “We've been given assurances they will walk more carefully.”

Killmer and Mikey Weinstein, founder and president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, both expressed disappointment that the judge ruled the plaintiffs had no legal standing to sue.

In her ruling, Arguello said Mullin's claims of potential retribution were “speculative and hypothetical” and said he testified that he hadn't suffered retribution when he skipped previous prayer luncheons.

Killmer asked Arguello to reconsider, calling it a legal error that would prohibit anyone from seeking a court's help if they feared retribution but had not actually suffered it.

Arguello interrupted, saying, "That was not my ruling, and if that's your argument, I'm not going to listen to it."

It was the last of several sharp exchanges between Killmer and the judge during the hearing, which lasted more than seven hours over two days. They sparred over the scope and relevance of Killmer's questions and over a government attorney's frequent objections.

"I'm being interrupted by groundless objections," Killmer told the judge at one point.

"I don't think they're groundless," she replied.

The government's lead attorney, Brad Rosenberg, said he couldn't comment and referred questions to a Justice Department spokesman in Washington. The spokesman didn't immediately return a call.

Denver Post
Feb. 9, 2010

Judge rejects bid to stop Air Force Academy prayer luncheon

By John Ingold

A federal judge in Denver denied on Wednesday an attempt to stop a prayer luncheon at the Air Force Academy.

U.S. District Judge Christine Arguello ruled that the plaintiffs — including Air Force Academy professor David Mullin and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation — don't have legal standing to challenge the event. That gives the luncheon, scheduled for today, the green light to go on.

Mullin and the foundation had argued that the luncheon violates the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against the establishment of religion.

Because academy commanders had passed along information about the event, Mullin argued that he felt compelled to attend and worried that he would be retaliated against if he didn't go.

But Arguello said a speculative fear of retribution isn't the same thing as actually suffering a harm. And she noted that academy leaders testified during a two-day hearing that the luncheon was voluntary and people who didn't attend wouldn't face disapproval.

Without a valid claim of damage, Arguello said, she had no jurisdiction on the case.

"The plaintiff has not met his burden that he will actually or imminently suffer the injury he fears," Arguello said.

Darold Killmer, Mullin's attorney, called Arguello's ruling "an impossible burden for an individual to meet."

"It is legally erroneous to hold that one must actually be retaliated against to have . . . standing," Killmer said.

Mullin, meanwhile, took the ruling in stride, saying he is hopeful that the lawsuit will make academy officials more careful in the future about how they organize and promote the prayer luncheon.

"I'm pleased I had the opportunity to go on the public record and have my voice heard," said Mullin, who described himself as an evangelical Christian.

The prayer luncheon is sponsored by the academy's chaplain service, but information about it this year was also distributed through more official channels. It is scheduled to feature speakers from a variety of faiths — including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.

The keynote speaker is scheduled to be retired Marine Corps Lt. Clebe McClary, a Christian whose beliefs critics have said are too fundamental for an interfaith event.

Colorado Springs Independent
Feb. 9, 2010

Academy prevails in prayer luncheon case

By Pam Zubeck

Federal Judge Christine M. Arguello ruled today that the Air Force Academy can hold its National Prayer Luncheon Thursday as planned, but the judge admonished the Academy to use more care in the future in who sponsors such religious events, according to a plaintiff in the case, AFA economics professor David Mullin.

Mullin and several unnamed plaintiffs sued the academy after it scheduled the prayer luncheon keynote speaker, Marine 1st Lt. Clebe McClary, who openly champions his Christian faith in military terms. He's said he serves in the "Lord's Army."

Mikey Weinstein, head of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, said Arguello ruled Mullin and the others had no standing to bring the action, because any perceived injury would be speculative. However, Weinstein said their fear of reprisal for not attending was real.

Weinstein also said the judge suggested there was confusion over who was sponsoring the luncheon, which is being hosted by the chaplains, not the Academy.

The case is the latest skirmish between Weinstein and the Academy, which he's accused of fostering an atmosphere that favors evangelical Christianity.

Even before the judge ruled, the Academy contacted media to make arrangements for their attendance at Thursday's luncheon, should it be allowed to be held.

KRDO.com
Feb. 9, 2011

Judge Dismisses Air Force Acad. Prayer Lawsuit

By Tak Landrock

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. -- U.S. District Judge Christine Arguello ruled associate professor David Mullin and a watchdog group, Military Religious Freedom Foundation, didn't show they had legal standing to bring the suit.

Mikey Weinstein, the director of Military Religious Freedom Foundation, said he was gratified by the judge's advice to the Academy to be careful in the future that chaplains, not military commanders, sponsor events like this one.

The suit alleged the event violates the constitutional separation of church and state because it appears to be sponsored by the commanders at the academy.

An e-mail sent on the behalf of the 10TH ABW Vice Commander sparked the controversy. The e-mail said:

"Please join us for the National Prayer Luncheon to be held 10 February 2011, 1130-1300 at the Falcon Club. This year's speaker will be Lt Clebe McClary, USMC, Retired (please see attached). Lt McClary is an inspirational speaker, author and a highly decorated Vietnam War Veteran. For more information or to pay cash for a reservation, please contact the Community Center Chapel at 333-3300."

Weinstein said the letter shows an endorsement by military leaders at the academy.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Air Force Academy said the invitation was sent to NCOs and officers at the Academy and attendance is voluntary.

Weinstein disagrees, "the more you say voluntary, voluntary, voluntary when it comes to the command structure all anyone hears is mandatory, mandatory, mandatory."

Weinstein claims 222 of his clients at the Academy, made up of Protestants and Catholics, were upset about the prayer luncheon. He said Mullin and other faculty members believe they'll face retribution if they don't attend, even though it is officially voluntary.

Weinstien, who is an Academy graduate, said he loves the school, but its record on constitutionally guaranteed civil rights, specifically in the area of religion, is as horrible as you can get.

A Justice Department attorney said Mullin's fears of retribution were "entirely speculative" and that he didn't raise his concerns with the chain of command at the academy.

The Air Force Academy released a short statement: "The Air Force Academy will have its voluntary, multi-faith prayer luncheon as planned on Thurs., Feb. 10th."

Rep. Doug Lamborn issued a statement on the ruling Wednesday:

"I am pleased the judge has made a common sense ruling in allowing the Air Force Academy to hold a National Prayer Luncheon at the Air Force Academy. These National Prayer events date back to the Eisenhower Administration and have been recognized and celebrated by Presidents, Congress, and the Supreme Court and on Department of Defense installations worldwide every February."

"Like the vast majority of Americans, I support people's right to pray and worship as they choose."

Colorado Springs Independent
Feb. 10, 2010

La vida de Vila

By Pam Zubeck

Adis Vila first laid eyes on America as an 8-year-old, after fleeing Cuba with her mother in 1962. The two landed in the arms of the Catholic Church in Miami and moved into a garage with a concrete floor.

Vila brought all she had: three changes of clothes and two pairs of shoes.

Twenty years later, Vila was working at the White House.

Today, she's the Air Force Academy's first full-time diversity officer, entering an atmosphere that could be more sensitive to women and minorities, according to the 2009-10 cadet climate survey.

Besides looking for ways to improve that environment, Vila will try to shape the Cadet Wing into a reflection of society. About six weeks after starting her \$165,000-a-year job, her public introduction took place last Friday in a conference room filled with blue uniforms and the AFA Board of Visitors, a 15-member panel of political appointees that meets quarterly and reports to Congress on the academy's morale, discipline, curriculum and other matters.

Standing only 5-foot-4 and lacking military rank or political title, Vila nevertheless put her audience on notice that "inclusiveness is really all of our jobs." That includes Congress, she said, whose members nominate students to the academy, as well as professors who instruct cadets on academics and staff members who select contractors. Diversity doesn't just include gender and race, but geographic origin and socioeconomic status.

As AFA Supt. Lt. Gen. Michael Gould said, "This cuts across all mission elements."

Giving back

There's not much Adis Vila hasn't achieved, judging from her 10-page résumé. She's an international lawyer, has an MBA from the University of Chicago and has studied at Harvard. As one of Ronald Reagan's White House fellows, she was charged with building coalitions among interest groups. She's been a lecturer, professor, federal bureaucrat, consultant and businesswoman. She's traveled the world and speaks four languages.

That kaleidoscope of experience arms her with knowledge to effect change at the roots, she says. "I have learned a lot about how one manages people, processes, budgets, and how one gets the best out of people."

She believes her upbringing also helps.

Vila's life began amid the Cuban Revolution, in which Castro's 26th of July Movement overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959. Her father supported Castro but soon saw things weren't turning out as promised, so he sent his only child and his wife to Miami and joined them in 1966. The couple divorced soon after.

Vila walked to public schools, where she perfected her once-rudimentary English skills. Her mom, uneducated with no work experience, rode buses to and from two factory jobs. Vila credits her teachers and neighborhood with helping raise her.

"I benefited greatly from the opportunities this country has offered me," she says. "At a personal level, it has been my desire to give back and help others. I'm experienced enough to bring valuable skills, and old enough and wise enough and humble enough to know it will take the whole village."

That's why she'll reach out to the community here and beyond for a hand. The academy will contribute regularly to the Diversity Journal, with a national circulation of about a million. She'll encourage the AFA band to explore other cultures through music performed and commissioned. And Vila also will help the academy identify and contract with more women- and minority-owned businesses; look for her speaking to the Colorado Springs Women's Chamber of Commerce and other local groups.

Her work within the Academy will include assessing staff and faculty. Though the institution ranks high for accessibility to professors, Vila asks, "How does the faculty represent the world in which we are going to live? Are they all coming from Purdue? From the Academy? Do we have a good match for those with foreign experience, multicultural experience? Many [cadets] will be exercising leadership in foreign countries. How can we use extracurricular activities to reflect globalization? These are the kinds of questions we will be building on."

Wing to shrink

But Vila's primary focus will be increasing diversity in the Cadet Wing. And that will be made more difficult by the planned reduction Oct. 1, 2012 from 4,500 cadets to 4,000.

While the Academy had been admitting more than 1,300 per year, the Class of 2015 (arriving next summer) will be cut to 1,120, and the Class of 2016 to 1,050. Thereafter, the academy will admit 1,165 cadets per class, which, with normal attrition, will meet downsizing requirements.

"No doubt it will have an impact," Vila says. "It causes us not only to be smarter on who we recruit, but smarter in how we retain."

She'll look at how and where recruitment is done, and helping students, earlier — perhaps as soon as in ninth and 10th grades — to better prepare for the Academy's focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

She'll also work with the Falcon Foundation and Association of Graduates on ensuring Colorado Springs provides enough sponsor families that mirror cadet diversity.

"These are small steps," Vila says, "but hopefully the combination of these will help us retain the cadets we do recruit."

Air Force ups wave power efficiency to 99 percent

By Emma Woollacott

Air Force researchers say they've managed to harness more than 99 percent of wave energy.

The research is part of a National Science Foundation-funded project to create the world's first free-floating, fully submerged wave-energy converter generating power from deep-ocean waves.

The Air Force Academy's department of aeronautics has been working on the system since the fall of 2008. The latest experiments confirm the simulations that triggered the project.

"Nobody believes simulations, other than the guy who did it. So we set up a very small, about 1:300 scale version of the deep-ocean wave in the lab. We built a wave tank and we built a scale model of our wave energy converter that we will use in the open ocean," says Dr Stefan Siegel, who is leading the Academy's wave energy research effort.

"What came out of those initial experiments is that we were able to get 95 percent of the wave's energy. That is, in a sense, confirming and replicating the results that we got out of the simulations."

That remaining five percent was lost to harmonic waves, but improved feedback flow control increased the efficiency to 99 percent in subsequent tests.

"There's pretty good reason to believe that when we scale up the experiment, it will behave in a similar fashion," Siegel says.

The Department of Energy has provided another \$400,000 of funding for the next stage of the research - two testing campaigns with 1:10-scale models at the Offshore Technology Research Center at Texas A&M University.

The center has one of the world's largest wave tank facilities, allowing the testing of a larger wave energy converter and eventually of three wave energy converters simultaneously.

Tri-Lakes Tribune
Feb. 8, 2011

AFA successfully harnesses wave energy

By John Van Winkle

Air Force Academy researchers have harnessed 99 percent of the energy in a simulated ocean wave, and are preparing to take their emerging technology to the next level.

The energy research is part of a National Science Foundation-funded research project designed to create the world's first free-floating, fully submerged wave energy converter that generates electrical power from deep ocean waves.

The successful experiment was the first demonstration of the efficiency of cyclodial wave energy conversion, a major step toward real-life application of this technology, said Dr. Stefan Siegel, who is leading the research effort at the Air Force Academy.

The academy's Department of Aeronautics began this project in the fall of 2008. The aeronautics department professors have decades of experience researching feedback flow control and fluid dynamics for various military aircraft and NASA spacecraft, which is the rare and necessary expertise to create a successful wave energy converter. The latest tests are experimental confirmation of the computational simulations which began the project.

"We had actually better than 99 percent wave cancellation and efficiency in those simulations," Siegel said.

"Now, everybody looks at simulations and says 'well you're making all those assumptions and deriving the equations.' The short of it is nobody believes simulations other than the guy who did it. So what we did over the last year here at the academy is we set up a very small, about 1:300 scale, version of the deep ocean wave in the lab, we built a wave tank, and we built a scale model of our wave energy converter that we will use in the open ocean. What came out of those initial experiments is that we were able to get 95 percent of the wave's energy. That is in a sense confirming and replicating the results that we got out of the simulations," he said.

That remaining five percent was lost to harmonic waves. But improved feedback flow control increased the efficiency to 99 percent in subsequent tests.

"There's pretty good reason to believe that when we scale up the experiment, it will behave in a similar fashion," Siegel added.

The computational research and physical research were both performed at the Air Force Academy. In many research environments, one of these two options is available, but rarely do researchers have both available. However, not only are both available at the academy, they are actually in the same building.

“This is really one of the great benefits of working in this environment, where we have both outstanding computational support and the lab has excellent experimental facilities,” Siegel said. “In this case we had to build the wave tank from scratch, but we have the lab infrastructure that supports that... and that allows us to get more confidence in our results.”

Others before him

Siegel is not the first to try to conquer the engineering difficulties of harnessing energy from ocean waves. However, to date, two things have prevented this technology from being successful: survivability and efficiency.

“There’s a very wide range of approaches people have been taking in trying to get energy out of ocean waves. They all boil down to two issues,” Siegel said. “You can say that nothing has survived in the open ocean for more than six months at a time; and second, whatever we put out there right now is not efficient.

“So why would we care about efficiency in the end? Efficiency in generating electricity boils down to what the consumer has to pay for their electric bill at the end of the month. For ocean wave energy, it’s fair to say that it’s not competitive right now with other forms of renewable energy sources, and at the same time, the devices we put out in the ocean get destroyed by the next best storm. So those are the two issues we’re trying to address.”

The converter’s survivability has been addressed through several adaptations, the largest of which comes from designing the converter to be part of a free-floating submerged platform. This places the converter away from the surface hazards created by major storms on the ocean’s surface, which have been the demise of others organizations’ attempts to demonstrate wave energy converter technology.

Cadet role in research

Cadet involvement is an integral part of obtaining and collecting these results for this project, which furthers cadet education and academic research. For academy cadets majoring in Aeronautical Engineering, research is a requirement, and every semester has Aero majors working side-by-side with professors on research and data collection. One of those cadets recently introduced to this is Cadet 1st Class Caitlin Miller, who was one of several who joined the wave energy project last year.

“Last semester, we pretty much worked in parallel with researchers, providing experimental results to validate the computational simulations they’d done,” Miller said. “It was a lot cooler than I expected. I thought it was especially interesting, because renewable energy is one of the big things people are looking at, especially considering the finite supply of natural resources. The potential wave energy has to become the next big renewable energy source is a pretty cool thing to be part of.”

Miller will further her research into wave energy this semester, as part of an independent study course.

The next level

The current NSF grant runs through September 2011, and another federal agency is providing \$400,000 of follow-on funding to literally take the wave energy converter to the next level.

“What we have in place right now is a grant from the Department of Energy and they are funding us to do larger scale testing. It’s for an 18-month timeframe, basically looking at two testing campaigns at the Offshore Technology Research Center at Texas A&M,” Siegel said.

The center has one of the world’s largest wave tank facilities, which will allow the test of a larger wave energy converter, and eventually permit testing of three wave energy converters simultaneously. “It allows us to take this one step further,” Siegel said. “Currently, we have a 1:300 scale experiment in our lab. The next phase is to do a 1:10 scale test.”

Ocala.com
Feb. 9, 2010

Free tickets for U.S. Air Force Academy Band concert

OCALA - The United States Air Force Academy Band will perform in concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 12, at Marion Technical Institute, 1614 Fort King St.

This is a free performance, but tickets are required.

Tickets will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis:

* 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, Feb. 11 - Marion County Visitors/Convention Bureau, 112 N. Magnolia Ave.

* 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 12 - Congressman Cliff Stearn's office, 115 SE 25th Ave.

* 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, Feb. 14-18, Marion County Visitors/Convention Bureau, 112 N. Magnolia Ave.

For more information, contact Michael Emig, Florida Executive Vice President of the Air Force Association and president of Red Tail Memorial Chapter 136, at 854-8328.

Colorado Springs Gazette
Feb. 10, 2011

BYU dominates second half in blowout of Air Force

By Frank Schwab

BYU guard Jimmer Fredette pulled up at the top of the key and took a shot no coach would advise, falling away from the basket with an Air Force defender right on him. But Fredette isn't a typical player. He drained the 3-point shot.

That was the first possession of the game, and it never got any better for the Falcons. Fredette, a player of the year favorite, was a factor in Air Force's 90-52 loss to the No. 7 team in the country, but Air Force's offensive droughts were a bigger issue.

The Falcons (13-10, 4-6 Mountain West) couldn't score with any consistency, and a sellout crowd of 6,028 — or at least the two-thirds of the fans who were rooting for Air Force — had little to cheer about. BYU hit 15 3-pointers and shot an astounding 69 percent in the second half. Even the positive strides for the Falcons were washed away.

"We did a good job on defensive rebounds," guard Evan Washington said. "But when they're making every shot it's hard to get a defensive rebound."

Just like their previous home game, against New Mexico, Air Force dug itself a huge hole right after tipoff. Fredette started the game with the off-balance 3-pointer, then hit a layup and assisted on another basket and BYU led 7-0.

Air Force gave some life to the crowd, scoring on five straight possessions, and cut the Cougars' lead to 15-12 before another onslaught. BYU went on a 16-0 run.

Air Force kept it respectable in the first half, and trailed by just 11 at halftime. Washington's dunk was the first basket of the second half.

Then the Cougars (23-2, 9-1) decided to finish any suspense. By the time play was stopped for the first media timeout of the half, BYU led by 23. In a sudden burst of offense, the Cougars hit 7-of-9 shots and scored 16 points in a little more than four minutes. Fredette, who finished with 25 points, had seven of those points.

The Cougars pushed their lead to as many as 40 points as the many BYU fans at Clune Arena loudly made their presence known with every basket.

"In the second half, we played very, very well," Fredette said.

Colorado Springs Gazette
Feb. 9, 2011

Jimmer calls Falcons 'very, very, very, very physical'

By David Ramsey

Jimmer Fredette delivered a virtual speech, and one of the longest sentences you will hear in 2011, as he described the handsy, physical style of Air Force defenders.

Fredette is, of course, the biggest name in college basketball, a probable Player of the Year and a ridiculously gifted shooter. The Falcons swarmed him Wednesday night.

This swarming was an utter failure. Jimmer scored 25 points while sinking 8-of-16 shots and 5-of-8 3-pointers. He carried BYU to a breezy, overpowering 90-52 victory. It was Air Force's worst home loss ever.

But the Falcons' attentive defending/stalking did get Fredette's attention.

When I asked Fredette about Air Force's defensive style, he responded with this 83-word sentence.

"You know," he said, "their game plan was to be very, very, very, very physical with me, just to hold and grab and do everything they possibly could to keep me off the floor and just go for the ball every time I went in and you know, not a lot of fouls were being called tonight and that's just the way the game was being called and so the game plan worked in that sense but I still was able to get some shots off."

I asked Fredette if he would use four "verys" for any other team he's faced this season.

"That was probably the most aggressive that I've been played. Obviously, every team plays real aggressive against me and tries to grab and do everything possible to keep me out of the middle of the floor and keep me from getting the ball, but they were definitely very aggressive tonight."

Anything over the line?

"No, they never go over the line. They just try to get in your head and grab at you and do everything they possibly can but they never had any cheap shots or anything like that."

Air Force coach Jeff Reynolds was told Jimmer had called his defenders "very, very, very, very physical."

"We don't play him any different than anybody else," Reynolds said.

But a couple minutes later, Air Force forward Tom Fow offered a different – and more accurate - view of the Falcons approach to defending Jimmer. He agreed with Jimmer's "very, very, very, very" description.

"That's our plan," Fow said. "To make sure every time he drove he felt it."

USAF Scaled Back Vision For New Bomber

By Dave Majumdar

The U.S. Air Force's new bomber will be less ambitious in its performance goals than once envisioned, the service's top uniformed leader said.

"We're not going to be as ambitious as we perhaps were at one time," said Gen. Norton Schwartz, Air Force chief of staff, during the National Defense Industrial Association's Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict Symposium on Feb. 9, referring to the nascent long-range strike program.

Schwartz said the less ambitious performance targets will make it easier for the Air Force to manage the program and for industry to deliver an operational aircraft on time and on budget.

"And that kind of thing will make it easier for us to manage and less challenging for industry to keep their promises," he said.

Schwartz said that in these difficult budgetary times, there is no leeway for "wishful thinking." He told industry, "It's a simple thing for me: Deliver what you promised."

One way the Air Force might scale back its ambitions might be to build the new aircraft using an incremental block approach to adding new capabilities, said Paul Kaminski, chairman of the Defense Science Board. He advocated an open systems approach that would allow the service to add new features to the aircraft as technology advances and as the threat evolves.

Most important, the Air Force must limit its ambitions for the first increment of the new bomber, he said.

"You want to be careful not to overreach with the first block," he said.

However, Kaminski said the new bomber should include the necessary hookups to incorporate those new features from the onset, because retrofitting such equipment would be exceedingly difficult and costly.

Retrofitting the aircraft with the needed electromagnetic hardening for the nuclear role needs to be planned in advance, he said. Thus, the new bomber should include the necessary space and wiring for a nuclear capability even if the plane will not receive that ability until later in its operational life.

Associated Press
Feb. 8, 2011

U.S. commander: Special ops forces ‘fraying’

By Lolita C. Baldor

WASHINGTON — The elite troops of U.S. special operations forces are showing signs of fraying after nearly 10 years at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, their commander said Tuesday.

Navy Adm. Eric T. Olson said that while the number of special operations forces has doubled to about 60,000 over the last nine years, the total of those deployed overseas has quadrupled. Roughly 6,500 special operators are in Afghanistan and about 3,500 are in Iraq, although those numbers can vary as units move in and out of the war zone.

Olson said the demand for the specialized units in Afghanistan is insatiable, forcing troops to deploy to war at a rate that is off the charts. And he said he does not see that demand declining in the next several years.

As an example, he noted that while 100,000 regular forces have been pulled out of Iraq, leaving about 47,000 there, just 500 or so special operators were part of that withdrawal, a fraction of the elite force there.

“Not on the same scale, but like the rest of the force we’re seeing the indicators — pressure on duty, pressure off duty,” Olson said at a conference in Washington. Even though the size of his special operations force has grown, it is being asked to do more, he said, “so we are, frankly, beginning to show some fraying around the edges that we are addressing.”

Altogether, about 12,000 special operations forces are deployed, and those not in Iraq and Afghanistan are scattered in other hot spots around the globe, such as Yemen.

Olson said one sign of the strain is that more midgrade forces are opting to leave service this year than in previous years. As much as 60 percent of his force, he said, joined in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks and believe they were part of something important for the last eight or nine years.

“But what seems good for eight or 10 years, maybe doesn’t seem as good looking ahead to 18 or 20 years,” Olson said.

While the force and their families have proven to be resilient, he said leaders are now taking measures to address the emerging strains.

Officials, he said, are trying to increase training, make deployments more predictable, and stick to the schedules so there are fewer unexpected shifts.

In addition, he said they are working to educate families about what the forces do and what they can expect. And Special Operations Command is devoting more resources to programs for wounded and ill service members, he said.

The challenge, said Olson, is to stem the loss of the midgrade troops, so that over the next 20 or 30 years, the U.S. will still have a high-quality special operations force.

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Defense leaders warn of big budget cuts fallout

By Lolita C. Baldor

WASHINGTON — Congress' failure to pass a 2011 defense budget bill is jeopardizing the military's effort to send more surveillance and attack drones into Afghanistan, as well as stymieing plans to buy a new Navy submarine, Army combat helicopters and other major weapons systems, defense leaders say.

As Pentagon officials fan out across Capitol Hill, pleading for lawmakers to approve the 2011 spending levels proposed by the Obama administration, they also are hitting lawmakers where it hurts — in their congressional districts and states. Less money in the budget, the officials said, will put at risk thousands of jobs and construction projects nationwide.

Right now the U.S. is operating under a stopgap budget extension that funds the federal government at the 2010 level. And Republicans, who control the House and gained ground in the Senate in the 2010 elections, have said they intend to use this opportunity to end dozens of programs and slash spending on many more.

‘A really significant impact’

Overall, the Army, Navy and Air Force say they would lose at least \$26 billion if the spending level stays largely the same as 2010, compared with the larger 2011 budget request made by the administration.

“This is going to have a really significant impact on us in four main areas,” Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said. “And time is not on our side. By March we’ll be almost halfway through the fiscal year. Even if you get (the budget) done in March, it still is going to be hard to do some of these things.”

Laying out a plan for \$35 billion in program cuts and terminations Wednesday, Republicans said they were determined to keep their pledge to the American people to rein in federal spending. Some, including Rep. Jeff Flake of Arizona, said he’d prefer to see even more savings.

But other lawmakers have spoken out against cutbacks in defense spending.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that is unacceptable that the military, in its 10th year of war, be expected to absorb such budget reductions.

Military officials were quick to say they will make sure that forces in Iraq and Afghanistan get what they need. But the cuts will affect training and equipment for troops at home — and many of those are slated for future deployments to the war zone.

Losing billions

On Wednesday, Republican lawmakers rolled out a plan to give the Pentagon about \$518 billion, which is about \$1 billion more than the 2010 level, but still well short of the \$531 billion recommended in Obama's 2011 request. There were no details on how much each military service would get.

If the totals in the stopgap spending bill stick, the Army would lose as much as \$13 billion, the Air Force about \$7 billion and the Navy nearly \$6 billion.

Living with those cuts, military leaders said, would force costly delays in major programs, such as the purchase of 24 hunter-killer Reaper drones used heavily in Afghanistan, the construction of a new Virginia-class submarine, a naval destroyer and an E-2D Hawkeye airborne command and control aircraft.

As an example, the decreased funding would give the Air Force \$1.2 billion less for salaries and personnel costs than the 2011 funding bill, and would require shifting money around later this summer in order to meet the payroll in the final quarter of the fiscal year.

"The trade-offs are real," said Jamie Morin, assistant Air Force secretary for financial management. "We would have to pull that money from other major programs."

Air Force Maj. Gen Alfred Flowers, the deputy assistant secretary for the budget, said 36 construction projects already have been deferred, and that number could go as high as 129, for a total of \$1.1 billion, if the money is not restored.

The Navy said the cuts have delayed and could jeopardize nearly 90 construction projects in 13 states, threatening up to 7,300 jobs. And it could force cancellation of major maintenance on ships, aircraft and engines that would affect another 1,300 private sector jobs.

At the same time, program delays could trigger price increases down the road. Canceling the order for a submarine this year would increase the cost of one that is already being built, Mabus said. He added that the cuts would cost the Marine Corps about a third of its procurement budget for equipment.

Army officials said the cuts could delay the awarding of contracts for a new ground combat vehicle, putting delivery of the first vehicle behind schedule. And there would be no money to buy four new Chinook transport helicopters that are used extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As for local impact, the Army said there would be no money to refurbish Humvee utility vehicles, and officials could be forced to shut down production lines at the Red River Army depot in Texas and the Letterkenny Army depot in Pennsylvania.

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Dreaming of a future Academy

By John Hazlehurst

Back in the '90s, one sharp-tongued activist characterized our elected leaders as "the rocking-horse Council," going back and forth, quarreling interminably, and never getting anywhere.

This time around, some of our mayoral/City Council candidates have been neatly boxed in by Jeff Crank's "no new taxes" pledge. They've promised to refrain from actually, like, governing, instead implicitly embracing four overarching principles: No new taxes. No old taxes. Sell stuff (e.g., Memorial Health System). Cut expenses.

That's fine, I guess, unless we want a city that can meet the challenges of this century.

Look at our history. This city was built by men and women who weren't afraid. They embraced big ideas and big projects. They took big risks. Without such leaders, we'd be a little nothingburger of a town.

Risk-averse leaders couldn't have rebuilt after the 1935 flood, couldn't have created our transmountain water diversion systems, couldn't have attracted Fort Carson and the Air Force Academy, couldn't have built The Broadmoor, couldn't have created TOPS, couldn't have struck it rich in Cripple Creek.

Right now, the ground is shifting underneath our feet.

Here, 40 percent or more of the local economy is directly dependent on military spending. That spending, inflated by a decade of war, may not continue. Will we still be waging war in the Middle East in 2021? If not, will Americans support the same level of defense spending? And if they decline to do so, what will be the consequences for Colorado Springs?

Consider the Air Force Academy. Has it, like a shopping center on South Academy Boulevard, become functionally obsolescent?

The Cadet Wing will shrink by 10 percent in the next three years, to 4,000. As every military branch faces spending cuts, the argument could be made that the Air Force is growing increasingly irrelevant in an age of pilotless drones and asymmetrical warfare.

"We're just a bus company," one AFA graduate told me recently. "We just load soldiers and equipment on transport planes, and drop 'em off somewhere. Fighter pilots? No more."

The Academy will never close its doors — but it may have to change, expand its mission, re-imagine its role. It's more than a service academy. It's one of the country's finest colleges.

So let's make it one of the greatest universities in the world.

Consider America's great private universities: Yale, Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Princeton, Stanford. Many are geographically constricted, unlikely to grow or expand. Compare that to the Academy, whose superb physical plant could easily expand to house thousands more students.

Suppose that we marshaled the resources of foundations, private business, local government, state and federal governments to create a partnership between the Academy and one or more of the great universities? Call it Harvard West, attracting the best and brightest from all over the world.

Elite institutions such as Harvard have been reluctant to expand, arguing that doing so would dilute the quality of their educational product. Those doubts would vanish in the face of such an opportunity, which would greatly expand the power, reach and influence of universities that participate.

What's in it for us? Great universities create enduring prosperity. An institution focused on recruiting the best students in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and India would bring excitement, new ideas, companies, jobs, new ways of doing things. The Sergey Brins and Mark Zuckerbergs of the future might go to school here, stay here, build their companies here.

Can we do it? There are few practical objections, but no lack of political obstacles. Military traditionalists won't like it, as traditionalists of another era dismissed Gen. Billy Mitchell's outlandish ideas about air power. The Pentagon brass won't like it, deficit hawks in Congress won't like it, and would-be local leaders fearful of Jeff Crank might be afraid to get off the rocking horse.

Who's left? The gamblers and risk-takers, business owners who have met payrolls, kept afloat in good times and bad, and built our private sector. Some are even running for office. So, to you candidates ... how about it?

Remember, it's only a billion or so ... and no new taxes!