

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-107017](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

More than 2 decades of conflict have degraded the Air Force's readiness, with wide-ranging effects on personnel, equipment, and aircraft from near constant deployments. To rebuild readiness and restore predictability, the Air Force has begun implementing a new cyclical process to organize and deploy its forces, known as AFFORGEN.

House Report 118-125, which accompanied a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, includes a provision for GAO to examine the implementation of AFFORGEN. Among other things, this report assesses the extent to which the Air Force has addressed any challenges in implementing AFFORGEN, and the Air Force's efforts to implement AFFORGEN align with selected leading agency reform practices.

GAO analyzed Air Force documentation; interviewed Department of Defense and Air Force officials; and visited selected major commands and units to identify any challenges in implementing AFFORGEN.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making four recommendations to the Air Force, including that it completes an assessment of minimum U.S. base staffing needs and issues an implementation plan for AFFORGEN that includes goals, a timeline with key milestones, and performance measures. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-25-107017](#). For more information, contact Diana Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or [maurerd@gao.gov](mailto:maurerd@gao.gov).

November 2024

## AIR FORCE READINESS

### Actions Needed to Improve New Process for Preparing Units to Deploy

## What GAO Found

The Air Force has taken steps to address some challenges in implementing its new process to organize and deploy its forces—known as Air Force Force Generation (AFFORGEN)—but continues to face a variety of ongoing challenges. The Air Force began implementing AFFORGEN in late 2022 to create forces that train and deploy together. To address lessons from early deployments, the Air Force has revised the composition of these forces and tailored the AFFORGEN process to specific types of units, such as bombers.

#### Air Force F-16 and F-22 Training to Improve Combat Readiness



Source: U.S. Air Force/Staff Sergeant H. Ley and U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman P. Sullivan. | GAO-25-107017

However, GAO identified several ongoing implementation challenges. For example, the Air Force has not completed an assessment of minimum U.S. base staffing needs. Under AFFORGEN, the Air Force planned to deploy whole units from U.S. bases. However, it has relied on some of these personnel to operate its bases and perform duties like staffing security gates.

The Air Force's ongoing efforts to implement AFFORGEN partially align with some selected leading reform practices and do not align with others. For example, while the Air Force has released visionary statements, it has not set goals to track implementation progress.

#### Assessment of Air Force Efforts to Implement AFFORGEN with Leading Practices

Leading reform practice	Extent Air Force efforts align
Establishing Goals and Outcomes	●
Involving Employees and Key Stakeholders	●
Using Data and Evidence	○
Addressing Longstanding Management Challenges	●
Leadership Attention and Focus	●
Managing and Monitoring	○
Employee Engagement	●
Strategic Workforce Planning	●

● Partially aligned with leading reform practice      ○ Did not align with leading reform practice

Source: GAO analysis of Air Force information. | GAO-25-107017

Air Force officials said they rapidly implemented AFFORGEN to prepare for potential conflict with near-peer competitors. These officials recognized that an implementation plan with goals, a timeline with key milestones, and performance measures would help ensure unity of effort across the service and a shared understanding of the path forward.