The mix of active and reserve forces constituting the total Air Force has shifted during the last decade's force drawdown. However, reductions across the active and reserve components of the total force have not been proportional. Moreover, decisions affecting one component may have been made independently of decisions affecting other components. Recent force reductions and transfers among components may not have been guided by a clear and accepted set of principles for determining an end-state force mix.

The shape and size of the force mix can have important implications for the cost, effectiveness, sustainability, and popular and political support of military forces. However, force planners and programmers may not be fully aware of these implications and may therefore make or advocate force-structuring decisions that do not optimally support national interests. This report assembles, examines, and rationalizes a set of principles to help force planners and programmers recognize these implications.

For the most part, fundamental principles applicable to contemporary active/reserve force questions have been hammered out in past policy deliberations. Our contribution was to assemble the principles in a coherent framework and to elicit a review and critique of the framework by current stakeholders and commentators. Toward that end, our research included a forum, held in May 1998, of leaders and thinkers from a number of military, civilian, academic, legislative, and interest-group organizations.

This research was undertaken for the Director of Strategic Planning, Headquarters United States Air Force. It responded to, and benefited
from, interest on the part of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve advisors to the Director.

**PROJECT AIR FORCE**

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