

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:40 a.m., in room SD-192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Thad Cochran (chairman) presiding. Present: Senators Cochran, Shelby, Collins, Murkowski, Blunt, Daines, Moran, Leahy, Murray, Tester, Udall, and Schatz.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF HON. DEBORAH LEE JAMES, SECRETARY

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

Senator COCHRAN. Good morning. We welcome everyone to our hearing today, which will involve review of the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget request for the United States Air Force.

We are pleased to welcome the Secretary of the Air Force, Honorable Deborah Lee James, and the Air Force Chief of Staff General Mark Welsh III. We thank you for your service as the Air Force continues its important role in protecting our national security interests.

The President's fiscal year 2017 proposal requests over \$120 billion in base funding for the Air Force, which is roughly \$1 billion more than the current funding level. The request also includes more than \$12 billion to support ongoing overseas contingency operations.

We look forward to hearing your testimony on these requests this morning.

The Committee recognizes that the Air Force budget request is built on a long-term strategic framework, which balances the readiness of today while modernizing for the future. It is our role to find the correct balance among many competing priorities.

My State, parochially speaking, is very proud of the Air Force's training and other activities in our State. We hope to support our Nation's air and space superiority as we have in the past, and we appreciate the service of all who are members of the Air Force team.

We appreciate your service to the Nation and the dedication that you bring and the sacrifices you make daily in behalf of our citizens and specifically the men and women in our Air Force.

Your statements will be made a part of the record in full, and we invite any comments that you might have.

Let me first yield to our distinguished ranking member, Senator Leahy, for any comments that he might like to make.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know we want to hear from the people who are here.

Senator Durbin is delayed on another matter so I am filling in for him.

But it is good to have Secretary James and General Welsh here. They both know we are facing fiscal constraints across the government. Our second bipartisan agreement did delay the threat of sequestration. It allowed a modest increase in the amounts allowed under the budget cap. But funding still remains lower than the amount our military planners have sought.

As we look around the world today, our Air Force is being asked to combat ISIS, Al Qaeda, other extremist organizations, to provide reassurance to partners like South Korea and Japan, and to European nations that are rightly concerned about recent Russian activities, and on top of that, be ready to go anytime day or night anywhere the Nation calls them.

We also have to support research and technology and development. The U.S. Air Force is the most technologically advanced and best equipped flying force in the world today. We want to be that same way tomorrow.

We have also got a moral obligation to take care of Air Force personnel and their families by providing the training they need so they can come home safely and the support services they and their family use when they need them.

So there is an awful lot in here. It is a difficult balancing act. You have to craft a budget with those demands and restraints and face tough choices.

So I think there are three areas that I think should be looked at.

First, the health of our total force, especially the missions where the men and women of the Air Force in all components have been strained by repeated deployments. Two years after the Air Force Commission, barriers still remain to continuum of service that allow them to transition smoothly between components to give the Air Force more flexibility.

The second, of course, the Air Force pledged to make every dollar count. How do we embrace competition in procurement? How do we end the cycle of cost overruns and delays in large development programs?

And finally, how do we find the advances in science and technology, research of the caliber we had in past that has given us so much military strength? How do we make sure that research capability is there for the future? We discussed with General Welsh last year the next generation engine Air Force is researching. General,

I believe you called it a game-changer. But we want to make sure we are the ones that change the game, not any other country.

So we have got some difficult choices. I do not think we can continue to use OCO (Overseas Contingency Operations) funds as a gimmick to bolster defense spending. We have got to find the money we need.

So I am looking forward to working with all of you. I look forward to any of you who wish to make visits to Vermont. I think you would be proud of everything that is done up there. I will be there this weekend, but I was saying to Chairman Cochran that he and I went there once when it ended up being 25 degrees below zero and remain friends notwithstanding that.

Thad, I want you to know it is only going to be 19 below this weekend.

Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Secretary James, we welcome you to the hearing. Any comments, opening statements you would like to make?

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF HON. DEBORAH LEE JAMES

Ms. JAMES. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Senator Leahy and to the other members of this committee. General Welsh and I are very proud to come before you today to talk about our budget but, even more importantly, to talk about the 660,000 active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and civilian Airmen, as well as their families. They truly are our priority number one.

AIR FORCE PRIORITIES

When I testified before this committee last year, I outlined three priorities, and those three priorities are taking care of people, number one. Number two is balancing properly readiness and modernization in our budget choices, and number three is making every dollar count. And I am here today to tell you all that these priorities have not changed.

But what has changed substantially over the past year are the threats and the challenges faced by our Nation. As we sit here today, your Air Force is working very, very hard to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL in the Middle East as part of a whole-of-government approach and an allied approach. In the past year alone, coalition forces upped the ante against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), flying more than 55,000 sorties in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, and this represents a threefold increase over the missions of 2014. And take my word for it. Our Airmen have shouldered the lion's share of this work.

A resurgent Russia now supports Assad in the skies over Syria, continues to foment problems in Ukraine, and indeed has announced his intention to modernize Russian nuclear forces.

In addition, very recently we observed North Korea conduct an illegal nuclear test and a rocket launch just last Sunday.

And if that is not enough, there is worrisome Chinese military activity in the South China Sea, and of course, we have growing threats in space and cyberspace.

The bottom line here is that our Air Force has a key role to play in each of these areas, and we are fully engaged in every region of the world in every mission area across the full spectrum of mili-

tary operations. Put simply, we have never been busier on such a sustained and such a global basis.

Now, to continue confronting these challenges and in order to maintain an effective fighting force, our budget submission balances capacity, capability, and readiness. It also invests very importantly for future modernization, though this is where we had to make some tough choices, given that the budget agreement for fiscal year 2017 did not provide the full amount that we needed for the Air Force, and as a result, we could not afford the robust investment portfolio that we would have preferred.

TOUGH BUDGET CHOICES

Now, I will detail our budget choices as I discuss our top three priorities, and let me begin with taking care of people.

Airmen and their families are, without question, our most important resource, and our budget reflects this truth.

With that said, you are well aware that we have been downsizing in our Air Force for years, and this simply must stop. We must now up-size in our total force way to address a number of key areas, including critical career fields like intelligence, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), cyber, maintenance across the board, and battlefield Airmen. And we want to thank this committee for supporting our active duty plus-up, which is going to go roughly from 311,000 to 317,000 Airmen by the end of this fiscal year.

But given our current operations tempo, we certainly cannot sink below this number, and I believe that the demands will indicate that we will need even more growth in fiscal year 2017. In order to meet these demands, I plan to take a judicious approach to incrementally increasing our total force beyond the current level, provided of course that we can attract the right talent, and we would be grateful, therefore, for this committee's assistance should a re-programming action be required down the line.

Now, speaking of total force, we are continuing to maximize the use of our Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve by shifting additional missions and workload when it makes sense to do so. Examples that I can give you include the fields of cyber, ISR, command and control, mobility, and space. We are also continuing to push the envelope on integration from the staff level right on down to the wing level. Later this year, we will be testing a new total force organizational construct called the Integrated Wing, or the I-Wing. The I-Wing, which in this case will be a refueling wing, is designed to leverage the strengths of each component, reduce organizational redundancy, and meet mission demands more efficiently. And if this organizational construct proves to be effective, we will look to apply it more broadly in the future.

Moving to other personnel concerns, we would ask for your support to provide requested funding for a 1.6 percent pay raise for both our military and our civilian employees, as well as targeted pay and retention bonuses for a variety of career fields, including our very important remotely piloted aircraft force. RPA and manned pilot incentives, by the way, are finally equalized, and this is tremendous news, but we cannot stop there. Specifically, we are submitting a legislative proposal this year which is intended to go

even farther so that we can retain our aviators, all of our aviators, against an improving economy and an increasing demand for commercial pilots.

Finally, this year's budget expands the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. It fully funds our child care operations, boosts educational benefits, and funds the most important infrastructure projects to benefit our Airmen.

My second priority is getting the balance right between readiness and modernization. And as we have explained in the past, less than half—less than half—of our combat air forces are ready today for a high-end fight. Our aircraft inventory is the oldest it has ever been, and our adversaries are closing the technological gap on us quickly. So we simply must modernize.

In terms of readiness, we will fund flying hours to their maximum executable level. We will invest in weapons systems sustainment and ensure combat exercises like Red Flag and Green Flag remain strong.

After consulting with combatant commanders, General Welsh and I agreed that we needed to make some adjustments to some of the world changes I mentioned earlier. One adjustment is the rephasing of the A-10 and the EC-130H Compass Call retirements. The bottom line here is we are not proposing to retire any of these aircraft in fiscal year 2017. Although we currently believe that we will still need to divest these weapons systems in the future, this change will maintain a sufficient number of fighter and attack aircraft across the force in support of current operations, and the rephase will allow us to better align retirements of older aircraft as we phase in the F-35. Furthermore, we are going to continue to look at this mix of aircraft each year, and we will be prepared to modify based on the global security situation.

Now, in conjunction with ensuring the right number and mix of the manned aircraft, we also need to get it right in terms of the number of remotely piloted aircraft, as well as munitions. And to that end, our budget adds 24 more MQ-9A Reapers to the inventory and increases our munitions buys to meet operational demand, including additional quantities of Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) and small-diameter bombs.

Now, turning to modernization, we are, of course, holding firm on our investments to support our top priorities of nuclear deterrence, space, and cyberspace. We will continue to advance on the F-35, the KC-46, the long-range bomber, and the combat rescue helicopter programs, as well as we will begin the Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) recapitalization.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, modernization is where we did have to make some tough choices. For example, this budget will defer five F-35's in fiscal year 2017, and we would expect to defer a total of 45 over the 5-year defense plan. We will also be deferring a total of eight C-130J's over 3 years, and that is three C-130J's less for fiscal year 2017. We will also have to delay upgrades to improve some of our fourth generation systems, the F-16 missile warning and radio systems, for example. And finally, many needed infrastructure improvements that we would like to make will simply have to wait. And we would renew our request once again for the authority to conduct a base closure and realignment.

SPACE LAUNCH

Now, just a few points, if I may, on space launch.

Point number one I want you to know is that I want to affirm to all of you that we are moving as quickly as we can to eliminate the use of the RD-180 engine. Ultimately we need two commercially viable domestic launch providers to give us assured access to space and the mission assurance we need when we are dealing with billion dollar satellites.

Point number two, we have obligated all the dollars authorized and appropriated in fiscal year 2014 and \$142 million of the \$220 million provided in 2015, with the balance of that money to be obligated over the next month or so pending successful outcomes on final negotiations.

Point number three, our strategy on this hinges first on technology maturation and risk reduction efforts, which is a very prudent approach to begin something that has this degree of hard, difficult scientific problems to solve. And then the second element of the strategy is to invest in public-private partnerships, first in rocket propulsion systems and ultimately to give us the total launch capability. I want to say that one more time. What is critical is the total launch capability. An engine is one component. It is an important component, but an engine alone will not get us to space. We have to have the total capability.

Point four is we believe deeply in competition. It is in the best interest of the taxpayer and it will contribute to a healthy industrial base. And everything I just told you is very much with an eye toward maintaining that competition.

And finally, point five, given the importance of space and the many, many complexities involved here, our strong desire for competition being right at the head of the pack, we need reasonable flexibility to access RD-180's over the next few years as we transition to these two domestically available commercial providers. So just as we testified last year, we think having access to a total of about 18 RD-180's is reasonable and prudent to maintain competition over these next few years.

Third and final priority is make every dollar count and to get the taxpayer the best bang for the buck. And we have got a number of initiatives that we are working here, including streamlined energy usage, cost saving ideas that come directly from our airmen, and continuing the march toward meeting the mandate to be audit-ready by the end of fiscal year 2017.

As I begin to wrap, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for your leadership and support of the Bipartisan Budget Act. Although the BBA does provide about \$3.4 billion less for defense for the Air Force in fiscal year 2017 than we need, this legislation is extremely important and gives us some precious stability and predictability. And we are very, very appreciative of this.

But we do continue to worry that we will return to sequestration in fiscal year 2018 and beyond if it is not lifted. As you know, in 2013, during that year of sequestration, we parked our jets. We delayed upgrades, and we halted training. And this created a readiness chasm. For the last 2 years, we have been trying to rebuild that readiness, but of course, our Airmen have needed to respond

to these real-world events across the globe. If we return to sequestration in fiscal year 2018, this will exacerbate the readiness problem and set us even farther back, and if this happened, our Airmen could be forced to enter a future conflict with insufficient preparation. And you know what history teaches us about insufficient preparation. It tends to prolong combat and it costs lives ultimately. And I just feel like we need to do better than that. So we renew our request to lift sequestration permanently and to eliminate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would now yield to General Welsh.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DEBORAH LEE JAMES AND
GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III

INTRODUCTION: THE WORLD'S GREATEST AIR FORCE

The United States Air Force remains the greatest air force on the planet. We are powered by Airmen with more talent and education than ever before. Our inventory, although aging, continues to be more capable across the enterprise than any Nation in the world. Together with our Joint and Coalition partners, Airmen provide around-the-clock Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power in defense of our Nation and our Allies. They are also vital to the most integrated Joint, Coalition and partner relationships in our history—even better than during the incredible combined success of Operation DESERT STORM 25 years ago.

However, we are experiencing a colossal shift in the geopolitical landscape. For the first time in a generation, adversaries are boldly challenging America's freedom of maneuver in air, space, and cyberspace in contested regions and near our Allies' borders. The era in which the United States could project military power without challenge has ended. Indeed, China has been increasing its military capability and is now expanding its grip on the Pacific. This compounds the risk of miscalculation or conflict in the region. Russia has attempted to annex Crimea and continues its aggression in Ukraine further pressuring the NATO alliance. At the same time, Russian and American Air Forces are both conducting offensive military operations in Syrian airspace. An unpredictable North Korea continues to conduct nuclear and ballistic missiles tests in the face of international condemnation. Syria and Iran have purchased one of the world's most capable air defense systems from their Russian ally while continuing to oppose our interests in the region. These challenges further complicate a relentless fight against Violent Extremist Organizations seeking to exploit weak governance and disrupt world order. The past 2 years are a reminder that stability is not the natural state of the international environment, that peace is not self-perpetuating, and that entire regions can suddenly descend into anarchy.

While the world's expectations of American airpower were shaped by Operation DESERT STORM, our near-peer adversaries responded to that victory by modernizing their forces with systems specifically designed to neutralize our strengths. Satellite-enabled precision, stealth, cruise missiles, and other military technology that debuted in DESERT STORM are now proliferating around the globe. Quite simply, our adversaries have gained unprecedented ground in just 25 years. In contrast, prior to 1992, the Air Force procured an average of 200 fighter aircraft per year. In the two and a half decades since, curtailed modernization has resulted in the procurement of less than an average of 25 fighters yearly. In short, the technology and capability gaps between America and our adversaries are closing dangerously fast. As our challengers employ increasingly sophisticated, capable, and lethal systems, your Air Force must modernize to deter, deny, and decisively defeat any actor that threatens the homeland and our national interests. This modern force hinges upon the globe's finest Airmen. We will develop these Airmen through world-class education and training so they are prepared for 21st century combat.

The fiscal year 2017 President's Budget aims to build, train, and equip an Air Force capable of responding to today's and tomorrow's threats. It balances capacity, capability, and readiness in support of a resource-informed Service strategy that Takes Care of People, Strikes the Right Balance Between Readiness and Modernization, and Makes Every Dollar Count. Congressional support for our budget, built in accordance with Air Force and National Strategy, will keep us on a path of dis-

ciplined modernization and begin to arrest the erosion of our competitive advantage while continuing to defend America's interests wherever they are challenged.

GLOBAL VIGILANCE, REACH, AND POWER FOR AMERICA... DAILY

Our Joint Force's strength and depth is a coercive instrument deliberately designed to deter, and if necessary, compel, our adversaries. We provide a broad range of military options for America. However, phenomenal Airmen, combined with airpower's speed, agility, and flexibility, often make your Air Force a preferred employment option, for missions ranging from humanitarian relief to armed intervention.

Today, in our 25th consecutive year of combat operations, your Air Force provides the preponderance of combat force against Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. We monitor these organizations with an unblinking eye and a 34,000-person intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) enterprise dedicated to analyzing and disseminating intelligence to empower decision-makers, identify targets, enable air strikes, and protect Joint and Coalition forces. We have flown more than 30,000 sorties in Iraq and Syria since August 2014, including two-thirds of the 9,000 Coalition airstrikes and more than 90 percent of the 19,000 Coalition tanker sorties. In short, your Air Force is leading the campaign to degrade and destroy VEOs who seek to upend world order.

Additionally, when Russian forces challenged the security and territorial integrity of European nations on its periphery, American Airmen joined our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines to present a united stand against Russian aggression with our NATO allies. Deployed combat and mobility air forces, ISR and space platforms, and cyberspace assets spearheaded a persistent and dominant air, land, and sea presence in the region. While strengthening this vital alliance, we are also building non-NATO partner capability in support of the European Reassurance Initiative.

At the same time, we are projecting power in the Pacific because China's defense spending continues to grow at double-digit rates as they fund and field an impressive array of modern weapons supporting a more assertive regional strategy. Thus, as China attempts to expand its claims in the South China Sea and coerce our Pacific partners, your Airmen are projecting power through a continuous bomber presence and by conducting reconnaissance operations in the region. We are preventing strategic surprise, bolstering freedom of maneuver and freedom of navigation for the Joint Force, and protecting the global commons.

Airmen around the globe protect American interests...daily. At U.S. Central Command's Combined Air Operations Center, Airmen lead Joint operations throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Horn of Africa. We have nearly 20,000 Active Duty Airmen stationed in Japan and on the Korean Peninsula, where we fly regularly with our Pacific partners. More than 23,000 Total Force Airmen around the globe conduct operations in and through space and cyberspace supporting the Joint Force. Your Air Force supported 25 space missions, provided GPS, weather, communications, and Space Situational Awareness capabilities while tracking over 23,000 objects orbiting the Earth. We flew nearly 1.7 million hours in 2015, equal to 194 continuous years of flying. We moved nearly a million passengers, the equivalent of every man, woman, and child in Montana. Air Force aerial refuelers passed more than 1.2 billion pounds of fuel and our mobility aircraft airlifted 345,000 tons of cargo and evacuated more than 4,300 Joint patients—all in support of the Joint Force and our international partners.

There is no mission more critical than maintaining our Nation's nuclear capability. Your Airmen operate two of the three legs of our Nation's nuclear triad and continue to improve the nuclear enterprise, providing the deterrence that keeps America's most lethal threats at bay. The responsiveness of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and the flexibility of the bomber underwrite U.S. national security. More than 35,000 Airmen protect our national interests and those of our Allies by ensuring a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear deterrent. Your nuclear forces ensure strategic stability with other nuclear powers and provide a wide range of options to deter strategic attacks and respond to emerging threats.

Lastly, programs like Airmen Powered by Innovation and Every Dollar Counts encourage Airmen to take ownership of day-to-day processes and improve our business practices. These campaigns have yielded billions of dollars in savings and cost avoidance over the last 2 years. These funds are then reinvested in readiness and modernization.

Today's Airmen—your Airmen—are dedicated to innovation, accomplishing their mission, and building a better Air Force for tomorrow... all while supporting and defending our Constitution and protecting our Nation.

A CRUCIAL MOMENT: THE DYNAMIC, COMPLEX FUTURE IS UPON US NOW

While our Airmen remain heavily engaged around the world, the average age of our aircraft is at an all-time high, and the size of our force and state of our full-spectrum readiness are at or near all-time lows. Non-stop combat since Operation DESERT STORM has placed a substantial burden on our Airmen and their families while straining the readiness of our personnel and the systems they operate. Without question, the U.S. Air Force America remembers from 1991 is now shockingly smaller and older: 25 years ago, we had 134 combat-coded fighter squadrons while today we have 55; we had 946,000 Total Force military and civilian Airmen while today we have fewer than 660,000. If World War II's B-17 bomber had flown in DESERT STORM, it would have been younger than the B-52, KC-135 and the U-2 are today.

Despite America's inherent strategic advantages, challengers are quickly closing the capability and technology gaps between us. Tools that were unaffordable to most nations during the DESERT STORM era, such as computing power, nuclear weapons, cruise and theater ballistic missiles, and other precision guided munitions have decreased in cost and continue to proliferate. Sophisticated air defense systems are becoming the norm. Furthermore, the declining cost of defense is outpacing the rising cost of offense, challenging your Air Force's ability to present an effective conventional deterrent. The bold and deadly actions taken by revisionist powers in the last 5 years would have been unimaginable just a decade ago. Deteriorating military strength is an invitation for conflict as rising or unstable powers seek to gain from our eroding competitive advantage.

We must counter these challenges. This requires agile Airmen who we trained and equipped for all possible scenarios with modernized weapons systems and infrastructure where it counts the most. We remain grateful for recent budgetary relief from the Budget Control Act (BCA) caps in fiscal years 2016 and 2017, but fiscal year 2018 and beyond will return us to inadequate funding to carry out the National Military Strategy. Uncertain future budget toplines make it difficult to deliberately balance investments to modernize, recover readiness, right-size the force, and win today's fight.

Our rapidly shrinking advantage over competitors is the result of their increasing investment in areas designed to blunt our strengths combined with our limited funding and that of our Allies and partners. In fact, our forecasts from 5 years ago reflected we would have greater funding and fewer combat requirements than we are experiencing today. The combined strategic challenges of international financial turbulence, tenacious violence in the Middle East, and more ambitious great power actors have created a gap between the funding we need and the funding we receive.

Combat requirements since 2001 have created an imbalance due to a necessary focus on operations in relatively permissive environments. However, that does not relieve the Air Force from our obligation to be ready—always—to deter or defeat an adversary in a conflict where air superiority must be fought for and maintained instead of expected at the outset. Our Joint Force has enjoyed uninterrupted Air Superiority since April 1953—the result of realistic training and wise investments. Despite our outstanding aviators, maintaining Air Superiority while flying 20th century aircraft against 21st century enemy air defenses represents a strategic mismatch. The fiscal year 2017 PB works to correct this, but in order to ensure we have the capacity for today's operations, we curtailed F-35 procurement and delayed some 4th generation modifications necessary to keep our aging fleet relevant against all foes. The longer we are forced to delay modernization, the more we jeopardize our ability to dominate full-spectrum conflicts. This is a risk we must not take. Although we provide world-class intelligence collection, rapid global mobility, air and space superiority, command and control, and global precision attack, your Air Force's future as a full-spectrum war-fighting force is in danger without substantial modernization.

A CALL TO THE FUTURE

America is an air and space power Nation. In an historic anomaly lasting 25 years, the U.S. has possessed unparalleled dominance in the air and in space, enabling a generation of Airmen to focus almost exclusively on operations against non-state threats in permissive air environments. However, dominance is not an American birthright, and air, space, and cyberspace superiority are not American entitlements. Without the ability to achieve national security objectives in air, space, and cyberspace—all under-written by a strong and reliable strategic nuclear deterrent—America's influence will diminish and the Joint Force will be forced to radically change how it goes to war. American lives may needlessly be put in danger and our leaders' options will be limited.

Air forces that fall behind the technology curve fail, and if the Air Force fails, the Joint Force fails. Your Air Force understands balancing combat capability, capacity, and full-spectrum readiness is a strategic imperative. While balancing today's combat requirements, maintaining readiness, and growing our endstrength, we must simultaneously modernize in order to halt the erosion of our technology and capability advantages. In the fiscal year 2017 PB, we made difficult choices to best achieve this needed balance. However, to successfully execute the PB, we need your help to ensure we have the appropriate funding, the flexibility to execute the choices we are presenting, and long-term budget stability. We also request the repeal of the BCA which increases the risk to the Nation and our Allies.

In order to create a consistent plan for our Service, we built a Strategic Framework that ensures our budgetary decisions are based on strategy. The core of this framework is a family of strategic documents describing the expected future environment, our Service core missions, how your Air Force will accomplish those missions 20 years from now, and what we need to focus on during this future years defense program (FYDP) to meet that strategy. The PB is built upon this resource-informed Strategic Framework, and it continues our efforts to "right the force" after fiscal year 2013's sequestration. This Strategic Framework and our three priorities of Taking Care of People, Balancing Readiness and Modernization, and Making Every Dollar Count are the foundation of the fiscal year 2017 PB.

Our strategy-driven fiscal year 2017 PB is consistent with last year's PB and offers the best balance for America's current and future air, space, and cyberspace requirements at Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA)-level funding. It is designed to synchronize budget and acquisition decisions with strategy and provide a continuing advantage against competitors across the range of military operations despite the modernization slowdown necessary to continue current operations. It is credible, affordable, and executable—if we're allowed to execute where we have requested.

Despite a BBA that resulted in a lower-than-expected fiscal year 2017 PB, your Air Force will support the Nation's defense strategy and the most urgent Combatant Commander requests. The fiscal year 2017 PB is the result of difficult, purposeful, strategy-centric resourcing decisions made to meet obligations set in Defense Strategic Guidance. It aligns with Department of Defense and Air Force 30-year strategies and continues to gain ground in our ability to wage full-spectrum operations. It maximizes the contributions of the Total Force and reinforces investments in nuclear deterrence, space control, and cyberspace operations. It emphasizes global, long-range, and non-permissive capabilities and focuses on unique capabilities the Air Force provides to the Joint Force. It invests in our most precious resource—people—by growing our active force back to 317,000 Airmen by the end of fiscal year 2016. As part of our initiative to right-size our force, we also will right-shape our force by maximizing selective retention bonuses to address skilled manning shortages. We will take care of our incredible Airmen and protect our most important family programs by continuing to fully fund Military Tuition Assistance, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response programs, and Airmen Family Readiness Centers.

In addition to right-sizing our Service for today's demands, the fiscal year 2017 PB continues our efforts to balance readiness and modernization despite funding challenges. This PB includes a \$6.5 billion investment in Nuclear Deterrence Operations, an increase of \$4.3 billion over the FYDP compared to the fiscal year 2016 PB. This investment includes modernizing nuclear command and control, replacing outdated and unsupportable Minuteman III ICBM equipment, and building the Ground Based Strategic Deterrence program to begin replacing the aging Minuteman III in the late 2020s. We are also developing the Long-Range Standoff weapon which will provide the Joint Force with a survivable air-launched weapon capable of destroying otherwise inaccessible targets in any zone of conflict.

Additionally, we intend to delay the A-10 and EC-130 retirements to maintain capacity in support of today's operations. We will fund flying hours to their maximum executable level, invest in weapon system sustainment, and ensure combat exercises like Red Flag and Green Flag remain strong. We will continue our top three recapitalization programs, though we have made the difficult decision to slow F-35 procurement. We will resource strategic assets such as the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) to detect global missile launches. We will also invest in preferred munitions capacity and the Combat Rescue Helicopter recapitalization program while continuing to grow from 26 Cyber Mission Force Teams to 39. Lastly, we will fund improvements to Global Integrated ISR with a focus on the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) enterprise. These include increased benefits for aircrew, a program to train enlisted operators to fly the RQ-4 Global Hawk, a basing study to provide options to support flying RPAs on a schedule more conducive to steady-state operations, and other recommendations from our Culture and Process Improvement Program, a bottom-up review of issues impacting our RPA force.

The BBA has forced us to make sacrifices as we balance readiness and modernization. In this case, we must delay five F-35s and slow modernization of our 4th-generation aircraft. With increased funding, we would invest in these capabilities now to ensure they do not compete for funding with critical nuclear and space requirements in the out-years. Just as importantly, we must delay investment in aging critical infrastructure such as ranges, airfields, and taxiways, an action we have repeated annually since fiscal year 2013 sequestration. Every year we delay these repairs, operations are affected and the eventual cost of improvements grows substantially.

Importantly, this budget must mark the return of a committed investment to Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power for America. A return to BCA-level funding in fiscal year 2018 will undermine our readiness and modernization; it will require your Air Force to depart from a long-term, Strategic Framework in favor of a course of action that funds only things absolutely required in the short-term. It will abet our challengers' efforts to further erode our capability and technology advantages, and we will be forced to slow our modernization programs, delaying our planned readiness recovery. A return to BCA-level funding will limit our space, cyberspace, and nuclear improvements and further degrade Air Force-wide infrastructure and installation support. It is critical that the looming threat of sequestration ends. BCA-mandated across-the-board defense cuts will act as a strait-jacket, preventing the department from reallocating funds to the most critical capabilities and investments at the very moment such flexibility is paramount. This will result in significant strategic risk and greater cost over the long run. fiscal year 2017 represents a critical point when the Air Force can continue to "right the force" in terms of size, capacity, readiness, and present/future capabilities. Alternatively, fiscal year 2017 could simply represent temporary relief before inadequate future BCA-level funding thwarts modernization and readiness initiatives. Make no mistake, BCA-level funding will result in longer timelines to meet Joint Force objectives; this could result in increased risk to mission and service members.

Our Nation requires bold leadership from the Congress. Your Air Force needs the authority and flexibility to execute our strategy through Congressional support of the fiscal year 2017 PB. We appreciate the BCA relief provided by the 2015 BBA, but responsibly sustaining and investing in U.S. security requires long-term budget stability and the repeal of BCA. Critically, even at BBA funding levels, the overall capability gap between us and our competitors will continue to narrow; we can preserve the advantages in some areas, but determined adversaries will close gaps in others. Accordingly, we are prioritizing the Joint Force requirements our Nation needs the most.

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ACTION

Today's national security challenges come from a combination of strong states that are challenging world order, weak states that cannot preserve order, and poorly governed spaces that provide sanctuary to extremists who seek to destabilize the globe. The world needs a strong American Joint Force, and the Air Force is its first and most agile responder in times of crisis, contingency, and conflict. The Joint Force depends upon Air Force capabilities and requires airpower at the beginning, the middle, and the end of every Joint operation. As our Army and Marine Corps get smaller, they do not want less airlift; they want it to be more responsive. As Combatant Commanders look toward battlefields of the future, they do not want less ISR; they need more persistent, capable, and agile ISR. Should our Nation find itself in another conflict requiring boots on the ground, we have the responsibility to assure air superiority so American Soldiers and Marines may keep their eyes on their enemies on the ground rather than concern themselves with enemy airpower overhead. America's Air Force must be able to disrupt, degrade, or destroy any target in the world, quickly and precisely, with conventional or nuclear weapons, to deter and win our Nation's wars. Undoubtedly, decisive air, space, and cyberspace power—and the ability to command and control these forces—have become the oxygen the Joint Force breathes and are fundamental to American security and Joint operations. Whether in support of global counter-terror operations or great power deterrence, your Air Force remains constantly committed, as we have without respite for the past 25 years.

In the face of a dynamic, complex, and unpredictable future, your Airmen provide a strategic advantage over America's competitors. They are educated, innovative, and motivated. Their ability to see threats, reach threats, and strike threats is an effective but shrinking conventional deterrent against America's enemies. These courageous Airmen, when properly trained, effectively equipped, and instilled with the trust of their leadership, will ensure the Air Force continues to overmatch oppo-

nents in Joint and Coalition operations and defend the United States from any who would do us harm.

The fiscal year 2017 President's Budget—and the flexibility to execute it as we have recommended—is an investment in the Air Force our Nation needs. The global developments of the last 5 years have reminded us that America's Air Force must have the capability to engage anytime, anywhere, and across the full spectrum of conflict all while providing a reliable strategic nuclear deterrent. America expects it, Combatant Commanders require it, and with your support, our Airmen will deliver it.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary.

General Welsh, we appreciate your presence here and your service as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. You may proceed with your statement.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL MARK WELSH III, CHIEF OF STAFF

General WELSH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Leahy, and distinguished members of the committee. It is always a pleasure and a privilege to be here in front of you. Thank you for your time today. It is a real privilege to sit here with Secretary James to represent America's Airmen as well.

DEMAND FOR AIR POWER RISING

The United States cannot fight much less win today's wars without air power. That is just the way modern warfare has moved. And the demand signal for that air power continues to rise.

Today's Air Force is supremely qualified to provide an asymmetric advantage at an incomparable rate, but the gap between our Air Force and our closest pursuers is closing and it is closing quickly. And we cannot afford to ignore that shrinking capability gap.

So while we work hard to continually become more efficient, which we must, and to minimize the cost of effectively operating our Air Force, if less capability or less capacity or less readiness eventually means that we lose even one more young American on the battlefield, we will all wish that we had made better investments.

The global security environment drives an insatiable appetite for everything our Air Force brings to the joint force, from ISR to command and control, to mobility, to precision strike and the air and space superiority that enables it all. Twenty-five years of combat operations have dramatically impacted our total force readiness, significantly aged our equipment, and have shown the brilliance of our Airmen and the loyalty of their families. The world is changing and the threat is changing, and our Air Force must change with it if we are to remain relevant.

Not once since I have been in this job in any air power discussion, combat discussion, or contingency discussion has someone questioned me about whether or not we could actually reach, surveil, or strike any point on the earth. No one ever asks me how our missions come together. No one questions whether or not we are capable of accomplishing a particular task. Today, American air power is a given, and I believe it is our job collectively to ensure that this Nation's ability to deliver that air power, when and where it matters most, does not diminish over time.

We fully understand our responsibility to help reduce the national debt, but as a minimum, we need the flexibility to shape our

Air Force for the future within our budget top line. And thank you for the support that this committee has given us to try and do that.

MODERNIZATION OF AIR FORCE IS ESSENTIAL

The F-35, the KC-46, and the long-range strike bomber are game-changers for us. They are long overdue and they are critical to success in any future high-end fight. And while they might be expensive, failing to push the strategic edge would place our Nation at unnecessary risk. Thank you for supporting those programs.

But they cannot be the only modernization we pursue. There are many other systems that we need to either upgrade or recapitalize to ensure viability against current and emerging threats, and without additional funding, the only way to do that is to divest old capability to build the new and that requires very difficult emotional decisions, decisions that simply must be made if we are truly to provide for the common defense. The platforms and systems that made us great over the last 50 years will not make us great over the next 50 years.

We have done a lot of thinking over the last few years about how to move forward with our service, and now over the next couple of years, we ask for your help to make the tough decisions required to move us in that direction. General Hap Arnold, the brilliant Commander of the Army Air Corps, stood up in 1945 and said let us go to work on tomorrow's air power. It is time for all of us to do the same.

Once again, my thanks to each of you for dedicating your time and attention to our Air Force, our Airmen, and their great families who give it life. The Secretary and I look forward to your questions.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much.

I am pleased to have a good turnout of Senators for the hearing, and I want to yield, first of all, for any questions to Senator Leahy, the ranking minority member.

Senator LEAHY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I mentioned in my opening statement and I have discussed with General Welsh before we have heard the next generation engine is a game-changer, more efficient in its use of energy, and it outperforms today's engines. I would ask the same question of both Secretary James and General Welsh. How do we make technologies like this a reality? Can we do it ahead of any other country?

ADAPTIVE ENGINE PROGRAM

Ms. JAMES. I certainly hope so, Senator, and we certainly are working toward that goal. So the budget for fiscal year 2017 has about \$285 million for the adaptive engine program and several billion, \$2.4 billion to be exact, over the 5-year plan. We are expecting to award to two contractors in fiscal year 2016. So the program is going well so far. And as you said, we have great hopes that this will be a game-changer for us. So preliminarily we think we can get 25 percent reduced fuel consumption, 10 percent more thrust, 30 percent greater range. So there is a lot of benefits here, and we are going to continue the investment.

Senator LEAHY. General Welsh.

General WELSH. Senator, I still believe it is a game-changer. We burn an awful lot of jet fuel, and if we save 25 percent of it a year across our fleet's aircraft, eventually by using this technology, we can either reapply that money or save that money for the Nation. I think this is something we have got to pursue.

Senator LEAHY. And you think we can do it.

General WELSH. Yes, sir, I do. I am very confident the technology will be proven and that we will have the opportunity to then look at insertion points or actually putting new engine technology into platforms over time to create the savings that I think we can reap from this.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you.

Without being parochial, not that anybody ever would on the Appropriations Committee, you have heard me talk about my pride in the National Guard and Vermont's National Guard, people like Lieutenant General Mike Dubie who just retired, Lieutenant General Bill Etter—what they have done for the Air Force and the joint force.

Are there other opportunities we can open up to members of the Reserve components to build those quality of total force leaders? I want to make sure that we are reaching out and grabbing all the best people we can wherever they are.

Ms. JAMES. I think the answer is yes, and we are constantly on the hunt, as I mentioned earlier, to shift more missions and to shift more workload when it makes sense to do so. I mentioned several of the mission areas that are top of mind that we have been working either the last year or 2 or that we project that we will continue to work.

I also mentioned the importance of more integration from the staff level, headquarters Air Force, for example, right on down to the wing level. So we are increasingly looking for opportunities to integrate in different ways. So we might have an active duty commanding a reserve unit or a reserve component commanding an active duty unit. So we are increasingly looking for certain opportunities that way.

We are actively engaged in trying to work continuum of service issues that you mentioned, Senator. So we are a big total force Air Force. We cannot get our job done without our Guard and Reserve.

Senator LEAHY. Do you share that feeling, General.

General WELSH. Senator, one Air Force. That is the thought process. There are three components. We have to make the strength of each component strengths of our Air Force. The boss mentioned the personnel integration, but the planning or the strategy integration is even more important. Every time we give a Program Objective Memorandum (POM) briefing to the Secretary for decision, there are two State adjutant generals sitting there in the room representing the other adjutant generals and the Governors. They have full access to our planning data. They are in the room. They have a voice. They interact routinely with our senior staff. We are doing everything we can to make a complete Air Force.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON STRUCTURE OF THE AIR FORCE

Senator LEAHY. I am thinking it will be 2 years—was it 2 years, 2 weeks ago—the National Commission on the Structure of the Air

Force issued their report. You have both done a lot to embrace their vision.

If you had to pick one thing, the most important thing, left to be done, what would it be? And I am thinking of the National Commission's report. Is there one important thing that still needs to be done?

Ms. JAMES. I continue to want to work to reduce the number of duty statuses that we have. I still think it is too many, and we are now engaged in an OSD-driven effort to try to get there from here. So that is an important thing that they recommended. We agree with. We just have to figure out how to do it correctly.

This I-Wing concept that I talked about that we are about to launch—that was an idea that came from the commission. It is a different way of integrating, and so we are very interested in that. We are going to test that out as well.

And then finally, just to reiterate the continuum of service, it still is not sufficiently easy in my opinion to flow between active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and back again. So we still have to attack that process and try to make it easier so that we capture talent, retain talent in one of the elements of our total force team.

Senator LEAHY. General.

General WELSH. Senator, I think at large the biggest issue is removing the frustration with doing things that make common sense because of the rules that are in place that restrict us from doing things between components that we would all like to be part of doing. That is going to take the help of the Congress. And so we will continue to bring legislative proposals forward to try and make that simpler, and we would really appreciate your help. And these are coming forward from all of us now together. And it is hard to get them through.

Senator LEAHY. I share your frustration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Senator.

The Senator from Alabama, Mr. Shelby.

ASSURED ACCESS TO SPACE

Senator SHELBY. Thank you.

I am concerned that some of my Senate colleagues may not fully appreciate the policy of assured access to space. General Welsh, could you just describe this concept and explain why it is so important to maintain at least two qualified and reliable launch vehicles capable of servicing the Air Force requirements?

General WELSH. Senator, if I could, let me start with, from an operational perspective, why assured access is so critical and then ask the boss to follow up with some of the details that she has been leading the charge on I think in the Department on how do you make that reality.

From a warfighter's perspective, the idea of doing anything that we do in the United States military anywhere on earth without the support we get from assets in space is a non-starter. Everything from precision of weapons to navigation to timing of operations to control of an encrypted communication—everything relies on assets that are now on orbit in space. And so the ability to replace them

when necessary, to augment them, to supplement capabilities with sensors and new communications links is absolutely essential to the vision of future warfare for us.

And, Boss, let me turn it over to you from there.

Senator SHELBY. Madam Secretary, go ahead.

Ms. JAMES. And to me and I think to those of us who have studied it, assured access to space means that it is absolutely critical that we have at least two separate pathways, two separate ways to power us into space. If you are reduced to one single way, that is the equivalent of putting all your eggs in one basket, and if something goes wrong, you can be shut down for months or even years.

So for those who may think back to the period of the late 1990s, we had such a period of time where we lost billions of dollars worth of critical satellite assets. There were accidents and so forth, and we were literally shut down, if my memory serves, for about 18 months where we could not get to space.

So we have said that we must have two different pathways. It is the number one priority for those of us who are focused on space, and we have got to get this right because the stakes are high, just as the Chief said.

RD-180 ENGINE

Senator SHELBY. Secretary James, you got into this earlier and touched on it briefly then. Could you offer your opinion on the wisdom of the proposal that would eliminate the Air Force's use of the RD-180 prior to having a reliable replacement that ensures our continued access? In other words, would there be a gap there?

Ms. JAMES. I worry that there would be a gap. I believe we need reasonable flexibility as we all work to get off of the Russian engine. I want to reaffirm. We are very much interested and we are working hard to get off that reliance on the Russian engine. But until we do, it is important that we have reasonable flexibility because of assured access to space.

Senator SHELBY. I think we all would accept the basic premise we want to build our own engine. We should not rely on the Russians or anybody else. Is that correct?

Ms. JAMES. We want our own capability. That is right. And I only use that word "capability" vice "engine" because an engine is a component.

Senator SHELBY. I know, the capability.

Ms. JAMES. The capability, yes.

Senator SHELBY. The General alluded to that earlier.

Give us up to date, as much as you can, knowing the building of a rocket, an engine of this magnitude is a difficult, very tedious thing. Where are we? You know, you mentioned the funding. This committee has funded more than the administration asked for because the sooner, the better. But sometimes you cannot rush technology, but the sooner, the better. Where are we and how long will it be in your judgment?

Ms. JAMES. What I have learned is that these are extremely difficult technical problems, as you say, and it is not quite as easy as simply reverse engineering an existing engine or anything of that nature. It really, really is hard science.

Now, the good news is industry is not starting from a cold start. They had already been making developments. And so what we want to do is leverage that development with some of our money and that is what a public-private partnership is all about.

Experts tell me that it is technically possible to get this done by fiscal year 2019. That is what we are charging toward. That is what the law has told us to do, and we are working toward that. It will be challenging. It is a risky proposition to have it done by 2019, but it is possible and that is our objective.

But an engine alone—I want to come back to an engine alone is not a total capability. So even after we have a new engine developed, it has to be integrated with a rocket properly. It has to be tested and certified. So we project that it will be longer than fiscal year 2019 before we have that total capability to power us into space.

Senator SHELBY. Without the Russian engine right now, there could be a gap, as I mentioned, in national security working with our Air Force, everything else. Could it be?

Ms. JAMES. I worry about that, yes.

Senator SHELBY. Thank you.

Do you share that, General Welsh?

General WELSH. Yes, sir. I think the idea of assured access to space is—everyone agrees with it. That is important.

Senator SHELBY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Senator.

The Senator from New Mexico, Mr. Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me thank both of our witnesses for their service. It is always a pleasure working with you on our Air Force family issues in New Mexico.

I am concerned about how the Air Force is going to respond and plan for future threats. It has been repeated often that the military tends to prepare for the last war rather than the threats of the future. And I am happy to see that both of you have addressed that in your testimony. Secretary James, you said uncertain future budget top lines make it difficult to deliberately balance investments to modernize, recover readiness, right-size the force, and win today's fight. And, General Welsh, you, I think, led with a quote a minute ago. Let us get to work on tomorrow's air power. And I like that you have focused on that.

In New Mexico, our Air Force bases are grasping with all of these issues, as you well know. At Kirtland Air Force Base, the Air Force research lab and the Nuclear Weapons Center—these are playing a major role to help modernize the force. And we're happy to hear today that there are going to be 34 additional positions in the Nuclear Weapons Center there in Albuquerque. The 58th Special Operations Wing and Holloman Air Force Base are both working to train our future warfighters, and at the same time, our special forces out at Cannon Air Force Base are bringing the fight to our enemies overseas.

Secretary James, I want to thank the Air Force and the Army for making airspace deconfliction at Holloman a priority. I think this effort has ensured that the airspace over White Sands Missile

Range can be further optimized. And as you know, there is nothing like the White Sands FAA blackout area anywhere in the world. As a result, I believe that Holloman is well positioned for the future. I assume that Holloman remains part of the long-term Air Force strategic vision. Is that correct?

Ms. JAMES. It is, and I am looking forward to visiting in the not too distant future.

Senator UDALL. So we are looking forward to your visit. And, General Welsh, you are also invited. I know you have got a lot of things on your schedule too.

And as you know, the German air force does a lot of training at Holloman, and as they consider their future basing, do you support continued training by German forces at Holloman Air Force Base?

Ms. JAMES. I do.

FUTURE F-35 BASING

Senator UDALL. Last year, I supported increased production of the F-35. This year, the Air Force is asking for less, as you know, and you noted that in your testimony. How does this reduction impact the overall cost of the F-35 and the potential for future basing? And will Holloman Air Force Base remain a candidate for such basing in the future?

Ms. JAMES. So in terms of the unit costs of the F-35, ordinarily you are right. When you decrease the numbers that you are buying, ordinarily that means that a unit cost will go up for each individual aircraft. In this case, however, because there are Foreign Military Sales (FMS) purchases in the works and other services are buying F-35's, we believe that this will allow us to still have a stable unit price. We do not believe that the cost will go up, at least not substantially in this case.

Could you try that next part about the basing?

General WELSH. Yes, ma'am.

Senator, your question about the basing, I am not sure what the question was.

Senator UDALL. Yes. The question was about when you go with a reduction—

General WELSH. On the selection for the F-35.

Senator UDALL. Yes, the F-35. Will Holloman Air Force Base remain a candidate for such basing in the future? Basically talking, as you go with the reduction, are the numbers of bases where those could be deployed—are those going to be narrowed now as a result of that?

General WELSH. Yes, sir. This change in the current FYDP is not eliminating numbers of F-35's. It is deferring them. And so our required number remains 1,763. We still hope one day to buy that many. And as a result, the basing process will not change. It will continue on the same pace using the same process we have been using up till now, and Holloman will continue to be eligible.

Senator UDALL. Great. Thank you very much.

And finally, New Mexico continues to play, Secretary James, a major role to modernize our nuclear arsenal, as you know, our two national laboratories. Just for the record, do you agree that modernizing and extending the life of the deterrent is still one of the

top priorities of the Air Force and making sure the B-61 is on time and on budget?

Ms. JAMES. I do.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your service.

And thanks again, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Senator.

The Senator from Montana, Mr. Daines.

MISSIONS AT MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, MONTANA

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is good to see you again, Secretary James, as well as General Welsh. Thanks for being here today.

As the proud Montana Senator of the Blanchard and Omaha trophy-winning airmen of the Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana, and also the talented airmen of the Montana Air National Guard who just received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, I want to thank you for your support, truly, of Montana airmen in their diverse missions.

A question, first of all, is regarding the Hueys in Malmstrom Air Force Base. They are using the Vietnam-era Hueys to provide security for the transport of our nuclear warheads. These operations happen every week, and I am very concerned about the security that they are able to provide.

The question is what is the status of replacing these Hueys that provide the security for our nuclear transports at Malmstrom, for which you are requesting \$18.3 million this year?

Ms. JAMES. So we are working on that, Senator Daines, I would say in a rather urgent way. We are looking at a variety of acquisition strategies, and certainly General Welsh and I have an eye toward speeding this up if we can. We will be trying to finalize that strategy in the next couple of months, like April–May timeframe. One possibility that we are looking at—we are not finalized on this, but one possibility would be to address the most urgent piece of this requirement first, possibly even through a sole-source situation because we could acquire the helicopters more quickly. So that is one strategy that we are looking at, but there is a variety of other ones as well. But please know that this is a top priority for us to get this worked out.

Senator DAINES. I appreciate it. It has taken quite a while to get here, and I think it needs to be a high priority. Thanks for putting the high priority on it. I look forward to resolution on that.

Regarding the ICBM fleet, it has also been a priority to ensure the Air Force is on track with the work being done to replace the Minuteman III with the ground-based strategic deterrent. What is the current status of ground-based strategic deterrent?

Ms. JAMES. The status is, once again, this is the future of our ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) force. So we are advancing it. It is funded in our 5-year plan, as well as in fiscal year 2017.

One new approach, which has not been used before in this world, is to look at the GBSD (Ground-Based Strategic Deterrence) as a total capability. In other words, do not just look at the ICBM missile and then separately look at the missile alert facility and separately look at some other component, but to look at the entirety of

it because it needs all of those pieces in order to be a strategic deterrent. So that is the approach we are taking and it is going to be moving along.

Senator DAINES. Speaking of the MAF, you brought that up. I was at Mike-1 there by Lewistown, went down in the silo a couple months ago. I am looking forward to what we can do to upgrade certainly from a capital improvement viewpoint. It was like a throwback back to the disco days of the 1960s and 1970s looking at that facility, and I am looking forward to working with you to upgrade those facilities there for the men and women who protect us every day.

C-130 AVIONICS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

I want to pivot over and talk about the avionics modernization program, the C-130 Hercules. It is something that I know many of us on this committee care deeply about. In Montana, we have got the C-130H1's, and their ability to remain operational past 2020 relies on this critical upgrade. So what is the status of the AMP upgrades for the C-130's?

General WELSH. Senator, the Avionics Modernization Program (AMP) increment 1 and 2 are fully funded. The timeline is we should complete the increment 1 modifications to allow people to operate both within Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidance and the International Civil Aviation Organization guidance by the beginning of 2020, calendar year 2020. So we intend to complete that program no later than December of 2019, and we have the funding in place to do it. The detailed plan for which units, which tail numbers will be modified first is in works right now and will be published late this spring. It is being done with the adjutant generals, C-130 wing commanders from all three components, and Air Mobility Command is leading that effort. General Carlton Dewey Everhart II has the lead for that.

The second phase, the increment 2, the modernization of the aircraft, actually is also funded in our long-range plan, and we will complete that by 2028.

Senator DAINES. In terms of flight readiness and so forth, do you anticipate any interruptions between now and 2020?

General WELSH. No, sir, we do not. And we do have the ability if there is some issue that raises its head between now and then, we can go to the FAA and request a waiver for aircraft that have not been modified by January 1st of 2020, but we do not want to do that.

Senator DAINES. Okay.

In my limited time, I want to go back over to the ground-based strategic deterrent issue. \$68.7 million were requested this year for the Minuteman III modification, and there are \$533.5 million requested over the next 5 years to keep it operational under the ground-based strategic deterrent. Can I have your commitment certainly to your delivery on time of this new system? I know we have got kind of a bridge here, but this new system is going to be critical I think for us. I assume we are committed here to delivering that on time.

Ms. JAMES. That is what we are going to be working towards, and you certainly have my commitment. Of course, if technical

things crop up, things of this nature, but you have my commitment and General Welsh's commitment that nuclear is number one for us and we are going to keep these things on track.

Senator DAINES. Okay. Thank you very much.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Washington, Ms. Murray.

KC-46A BASING

Senator MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank my colleagues for allowing me to jump ahead of you here today.

Secretary James, I wanted to ask you. In your remarks, you mentioned the incredible work that our Air Force tankers have done historically and most recently in coalition efforts in the Middle East. Just last year, tankers transferred more than 1.2 billion—billion—pounds of fuel to other aircraft. The demand is growing and tankers are really critical to our ability to operate around the world. But as we all know, the tanker fleet is aging, and we all understand the need to continue the replacement of the KC-135.

So I was really concerned when I heard the Air Force is considering cutting by a third the number of tankers we are going to buy for main operating base 4. And I wanted to ask you why you are considering a reducing basing option with only 24 tankers instead of 36 for main operating base 4.

General WELSH. Senator, what we are doing in the criteria is so that we can look at a broad range of the bases who are eligible and capable of operating KC-46's from them. As we score those bases, the idea is to look at total force solutions for the active, the Air National Guard, and the Air Force Reserve that, given our current fiscal constraints, offer best value to the Air Force. Every wing that we have cannot handle 36 aircraft, so we are looking at both 24 and 36. We know from previous basing actions that hangers, ramp space, and other military construction project requirements can drive significant upfront costs. Thus, in some scenarios, a bed down of 24 aircraft vice 36 might offer best overall value to the Air Force. Since we have not yet analyzed 24 aircraft options, let's do the assessment up front so that we can now use in the next couple of cycles.

Senator MURRAY. Well, we have talked about this a lot, but I want to emphasize it again today. If the Air Force is committed to its plan to buy the full number of tankers and rebalance to Asia and support operations around the world, Fairchild Air Force Base is the absolute best location for main operating base 4. It can handle the 36 aircraft. It is strategically located, as you know, and is close to some of our other important bases. We have invested a lot in making sure that Fairchild is ready for the new tankers. So I hope you will quickly complete the selection and I think look at what we need in terms of the full tanker base.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS AT THE U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The other question I just wanted to ask you about was the DOD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office that recently released its annual report on sexual harassment and violence at the military service academies. It showed that the Air Force Academy

continues to struggle in stopping sexual assault. And I appreciate how hard it is to change culture in a large organization, but strong leaders and a culture that categorically forbids sexual assault is essential to reversing that trend.

So I wanted to ask you how you account for the astonishing increase in sexual assaults at the Air Force Academy, 49 in this last academic year.

Ms. JAMES. Well, Senator, I want to just begin by saying sexual assault is a scourge upon all of us, and we are working very hard to reduce it, with the ultimate goal of eliminating it. And there are all kinds of efforts that are directed toward that action.

I do think we have a very strong leader at our Air Force Academy, Lieutenant General Michelle D. Johnson, and I know she is working this hard as well. I am going to have to go back and consult a little bit more with her to get any new thoughts that she has about new actions that we should consider taking. But I can tell you that the leadership of the Air Force at various levels is working this very hard, everything from adding more coordinators, more personnel, different types of training, peer-to-peer approaches. So there is a lot going on to advance on this important topic.

Senator MURRAY. I really want you to go back and talk to her, and I want to find out what the answer is and what we are doing to change the culture. It cannot just be words at a committee hearing. It has to be action. And these numbers continue to be really disconcerting.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Senator.

The Senator from Maine, Ms. Collins.

AERIAL REFUELING

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

General Welsh, I was very pleased to hear both you and the Secretary acknowledge the enormous contributions made by our Air National Guard and Reserve.

And I want to thank you, General Welsh, for coming with your wife last winter to visit the air refueling wing in Bangor. I know that meant a lot to the men and women serving there.

That wing is about to deploy four aircraft with 379 support personnel to CENTCOM. That represents one of the largest deployments in the past decade.

Meanwhile, back at home, they have to maintain the 24/7 refueling capability which the U.S. Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, General Breedlove, has called a critical capability.

How does the budget request address the increasing demands that are being placed on our Guard and Reserve as you balance funding across the total force?

General WELSH. Senator, there are a couple of things. One thing specifically related to the tanker fleet that is not obvious in the 2017 numbers, but if you look through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) at the bringing on the KC-46, our intent is actually to increase the number of tanker airframes we have from 455 up to 479 and then start divesting the KC-135's after that point. So we need to build the fleet up a little bit to make sure that we

have a robust enough fleet that we are not overtaxing the units who are constantly deploying from all three components.

In the tanker fleet, approximately one-half (53.6%) of our air refueling fleet is actually in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, not in the active duty. And that adds an additional not mobilization but voluntary mobilization for members of those units, and they have been doing it for going on 25 years now and remarkably well. And so everything that we have been doing with the active duty tanker fleet we are doing for the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve tanker fleet.

Every one of these issues that I mentioned previously to Senator Leahy's question about authorities and ability to change statuses quickly, to move people on and off active duty back into Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard duty allows them to volunteer more often and not get hung up in the administrative of the status change. That will help the unit in Bangor, Maine immensely. As you know, they are very frustrated by this as is everybody else in the system. And so we will continue to work this, but we are working it as a total force. The demand is high everywhere for us right now. And they do not mind the work because it is important work, but anything we can do to remove the frustrations as they try and get on and off status to do the job would be very helpful.

REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT PILOT SHORTAGE

Senator COLLINS. Exactly. Thank you.

Secretary James, an important manpower issue that is facing the Air Force and that affects operations is the shortage of drone pilots. It is my understanding that last year 240 drone pilots departed the career field. And I remember last year General Welsh testifying that the Air Force was only capable of training 180 drone pilots a year despite an annual need of 300.

Are you still facing the same kinds of shortages and retention problems? And if so, is there a way that we could assist you in filling that very important gap?

Ms. JAMES. So maybe let me start but then yield to you, Chief, for some additional context.

So we are doubling the training capacity, number one, in order to get our pipeline up, get more people trained. So hopefully that piece of it over the next year or so will be better resolved. By the way, this is an area where every time we think we are meeting the requirement, the requirement tends to go up because the combatant commanders around the world always want more and more and more ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance). But we are doubling the ability to train people. So we think that is going to help quite a bit.

I mentioned we are putting in place better incentives to retain people into the career field. We are working on quality-of-life matters. We are calling upon our Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve more to help us. We are selectively using more contractors to help us. All of this is designed to increase the number of people in the RPA world because the requirements are going up. And by the way, the quality-of-life issues are serious. So we need to make it a little bit less stressful for the people who are currently doing

this important work, and by infusing more people into the enterprise, we think it will become less stressful.

Senator COCHRAN. The time of the Senator has expired.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would just ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to submit some additional questions on JSTARS, an issue at a DFAS center in my State, and several other issues for the record.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. The Senator from Hawaii, Mr. Schatz.

ENERGY ASSURANCE

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary James and General Welsh, thank you for your service.

Secretary James, when it comes to electricity, as you know, the Air Force is different in that it operates from its bases in the United States to support warfighters around the world and that affects its energy needs. If the grid goes down, for example, the airmen at our bases in Creech, Cannon, or Beale flying drones in Afghanistan cannot support counterterrorism operations. Energy assurance is therefore critical for the Air Force in a different way, and yet most of our bases rely on power from a brittle, old civilian electricity grid. And so how is the Air Force investing in energy security, grid stability, and assured power to protect its warfighting mission?

Ms. JAMES. So we have a saying in the Air Force, part of mission assurance is energy assurance. And probably looking back over time, we have not had enough of a focus in this direction. So going forward, we are going to try to do more. We are going to try to do better.

And I would just bring to your attention a couple of new things on the horizon.

First, we have directed the standup of an office of energy assurance to be our center of excellence and to kind of drive the train on our efforts going forward for strategic energy agility.

And the second thing is we are launching a program called REDI, which stands for Resilient Energy Demonstration Initiative, and that is specifically to develop a handful of pilot projects to push the envelope on energy assurance. And one of those is going to be at the 154th Air National Guard Wing.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

MAUI SUPERCOMPUTER

Here is another issue for the PACOM AOR (Pacific Command Area of Responsibility). We have two assets on the island of Maui. We have a supercomputer and a space surveillance site. The surveillance site collects the data protecting our satellites from space debris and potential threats from adversaries, but then it sends it back to the continental United States for processing. We have a supercomputer on Maui, but it is not part of the SCI network.

And so it seems to me that the delay that we are having in terms of wanting that real-time data could be resolved if we considered making the Maui supercomputer part of the SCI network. And I

know these are preliminary thoughts, but I am wondering whether you would be willing to take a look at the possible synergy. It is on the same island. And you would be able to resolve the problem of having delays in processing of data. And some of these decision analytics are pretty time-sensitive, and the fact that we are sending it back to the mainland and getting the data later than we need it I think is something that we need to resolve.

Ms. JAMES. Yes. Let us take it back and talk to the team, and we will get back to you on that, Senator.

[The information follows:]

There is a long history of synergy between the Air Force Research Laboratory's Maui Space Surveillance Complex (MSSC) and the Maui High Performance Computing Center (MHPCC), a critical mission area of Space Situational Awareness (SSA).

The MSSC data and imagery is collected for many purposes including protecting our satellites from space debris and potential adversaries. Typically, the SSA data collected is at the Secret or below classification level and is processed in near real-time on the island of Maui, using computers located within the Maui Research and Technology Park in Kihei, HI. MSSC researchers routinely utilize MHPCC systems and personnel to accomplish their research objectives. This allows the MSSC to be timely and responsive to warfighter needs, including the Joint Space Operations Center, the National Air and Space Intelligence Center, and other national security customers.

However, there are times when satellite owners request data they will only allow to be processed in their own mainland facilities, due to a higher classification level requiring an SCI network. While the Air Force Research Laboratory is responsible for the daily operations of the MHPCC, the center is one of five DOD Supercomputing Resource Centers administered by the Army, as part of the DOD High Performance Computing Modernization Program (HPCMP). The Air Force and Army have a strong collaborative relationship in developing and shaping the future of the MHPCC as part of the overall HPCMP program. We have already shared your ideas about connecting the MHPCC computers to the SCI network with HPCMP leadership.

AIR MUNITIONS MODERNIZATION

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

This question is for General Welsh. I agree that our lead in the area of air superiority is shrinking and that our adversaries are developing increasingly sophisticated and in some cases superior systems. Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr. at PACOM has spoken about the need for advanced weapons systems to defeat our potential adversaries and to operate in a contested environment.

As you look at our developments of NextGen aircraft, I worry that we—we will probably maintain our lead on the aircraft side, but not necessarily have the conventional munitions sort of stay at the same pace. And I am wondering if you can talk about what the Air Force is doing to make sure that as we continue to invest in NextGen aircraft, that we make sure that we do not have sort of Cadillac aircraft and, with all due respect, Chevy munitions.

General WELSH. Yes, sir. We have been actually working pretty hard to understand why we need to and how we can mitigate the risk of weapons systems that can be degraded by other systems, whether it is air-to-ground munitions that is Global Positioning System (GPS)-dependent or it is an air-to-air munition that is susceptible to Digital Radio Frequency Memory (DRFM) jamming, for example. There are things that we have got to be aware of as we build new weapons for our inventory. All that is factored into the

planning we are doing for the next 10 years worth of weapons inventory.

I am actually pretty confident that we have a good plan. Now we have got to finalize it and get it funded and make sure that you and the other members of this committee and others on Capitol Hill who support us understand what that plan looks like.

Senator SCHATZ. Well, that is what I was going to ask. Is this an appropriations issue? Is this something that is going to require additional funding so that the munitions can catch up?

General WELSH. Sir, some of it will. Some of it is already included in black budgets. Some of it is stuff that we are working on now for 10 to 15 years and out. And some of it is relatively near-term that the Congress has helped us with. Some of the conventional munitions problem we have is just a matter of replacing inventories and being able to replace weapons that we are dropping this year in Iraq and Syria. It has taken us 3 years to replace a weapon that we dropped, and now that you have allowed us to use OCO to do that based on projections, that is a huge plus for us.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Kansas, Mr. Moran.

KC-46A BASING AT MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE, KANSAS

Senator MORAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Madam Secretary, General Welsh, thank you for your military and public service. Thanks for the opportunity to have a conversation today.

Fortunately, one of my priorities is one of the Air Force's priorities, and that is the KC-46A. And I would be delighted to have you bring me up to date, to bring the committee up to date on the current manufacturing state of that aircraft, the circumstance we have with its basing, and the infrastructure that is required at McConnell to accomplish the mission of the KC-46A tanker program.

And, Madam Secretary, I understand that you and I are still working on a time in which you are going to visit McConnell, and I welcome that. I understand that you proposed a date and I have accepted. So I do not know what that means in our relationship, but I appreciate the circumstance that I now find myself in.

Ms. JAMES. Great. Well, I will say overall the program, the KC-46A program, remains on track, I will say, to meet that next contractual milestone, which is what we call 18 Primary Aircraft Authorized (PAA), by the timeframe. I will say there is like very little to no margin left in that timeframe. There have been some developmental delays which may delay some of the fielding by a few months.

With respect to McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, I would just say that the Military Construction (MILCON) to support the KC-46 is on schedule. We are projecting aircraft to be arriving in the March of 2017 timeframe, if I am not mistaken. And so that is all looking good, and I am looking forward to making a visit.

Senator MORAN. Thank you.

And I also understand that the military construction budget includes construction of an air traffic control tower, and I appreciate that, assuming that that is true.

General WELSH. Yes, Senator, it is true. It is funded for fiscal year 2017, and the other 12 projects that are ongoing are also fully funded to support the beddown of the KC-46.

Senator MORAN. Very good. If there is any way that I can be of help in regard to any of these issues, please let me know. We would be considered the place for the basing of the KC-46A tanker. Spirit AeroSystems, also headquartered in Wichita, Kansas, is the manufacturer of the fuselage. And so the manufacturing process—we are pleased to hear of its current timeliness and compliment them as well.

CYBERSECURITY

Let me turn to the issue of cybersecurity. We had a conversation in the last opportunity that I had to question you in particular about the Air National Guard and its role. We have the 177th located at McConnell Air Force Base. They are a red team, NSA-certified, the only Air Guard unit with that designation. And my goal and my conversations with you previously have been to try to make certain that the components that you mentioned, General, are coordinating their efforts and that the skill set and capabilities of that red unit at McConnell are being recognized and fully integrated into the cybersecurity efforts by the entire Air Force.

And in particular, I want to raise two issues.

One is resources. There have been and continue to be positions that are unfilled, and that is related to resources. And we need to make certain that that is not a continuing problem.

The second part is training. We want to make certain that there is consistent and available training for those who work in those units, both active and Reserve component.

And I would welcome your thoughts about both those issues: the resourcing necessary to have the number of personnel and the capabilities to train current and future staffing decisions.

General WELSH. Senator, when the Air National Guard came out last year with their plan to expand this unit—so the unit will go, as you well know, from a group to a wing this year—part of that discussion was do we have the mission requirement for these additional units. The answer to that was yes. The second half was do we have the resources to support this. Can the Air National Guard recruit from the community? Can we build these units and make them a viable contributor to both the State and to the Nation on the national security side of the house? The answer to all those questions is yes.

The unit is just transitioning, and so I do not know if the positions you are talking about are positions that just have not filled because we have expanded the unit and we have not filled them yet. I will check with Air National Guard and get back to your staff on where we stand with that and what the issues are, if there are any issues, or if they are just in the build process.

[The information follows:]

The manpower changes in the Cyber Operations Group (177th Information Aggressor Squadron and 127th Cyberspace Operations Squadron) at McConnell Air

Force Base, KS, were impacted by the fiscal year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act which placed a hold on manpower movements in Air National Guard cyber units pending a mission analysis of cyber in the Department of Defense and a report containing the results to Congress. The report was completed and turned in September 2014; however, the Air National Guard extended the force structure hold to allow for more thorough development of Cyber Mission Force guidance and establishment of clear budgetary direction. With the release of fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act the Air National Guard was confident in the overall resourcing of the cyber enterprise and moved forward with planned force structure changes in the cyber mission area. The Kansas National Guard leadership received manpower templates for these units in May of 2015. The unit manning documents are being processed and are scheduled for release to the state in April of 2016.

General WELSH. On the mission side, the entire Department of Defense is still feeling its way into the cyber domain. Our focus up till today has been on filling the cyber mission force supporting U.S. Cyber Command on behalf of the Nation and on behalf of combatant commanders. All the services have been focused on that. We have a couple more years to go until those are fully manned. The Air National Guard does play a major role in that.

That is not what this unit is needed to do. So the unit in Kansas will be one of the units that we use to start building the broader cyber capability inside our Air Force. How do we do our core missions in, through, and from the cyber domain? And that is the intent. This unit will be part of that effort directly, indirectly, or as a red team supporting that effort over time.

So that is the intent for the unit's future mission. It just does not have a lot around it in terms of the rest of the Air Force doing this mission yet. So it is going to be a little bit of a slow start on the mission side, and they will augment the effort that supports the national side under title 50 for National Security Agency (NSA) or Title 10 for U.S. Cyber Command because you have a lot of really talented people who have done this business for a while in that unit.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, General. And we are happy to be at the forefront and look forward to using our expertise to help the Air Force fulfill its cybersecurity mission.

And again, Madam Secretary, I look forward to being with you in Kansas in the near future.

Ms. JAMES. Thank you.

Senator MORAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Montana, Mr. Tester.

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here. Secretary James and General Welsh, we very much appreciate your service to the country.

And I will follow on the Senator from Kansas' lead, inviting you out to Montana. We would love to have there and/or both of you out at any point in time. We are very proud of our Air Force and the Air Guard in Montana.

I believe you said earlier, Secretary James—and do not let me put words in your mouth—that the nuclear mission was the number one priority.

Ms. JAMES. It is number one, yes.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE MODERNIZATION

Senator TESTER. So tell me three things in this budget that makes investments in the nuclear arsenal that will make it operational for decades to come.

Ms. JAMES. Well, we have talked some about the ground-based strategic deterrence.

Senator TESTER. Okay. That is one.

Ms. JAMES. That clearly is important.

We have the long-range strike bomber, which will, of course, be nuclear capable. That will be part of our air component.

We have the B-61 that we are investing in.

We have the LRSO, the long-range standoff weapon.

And of course, the people of the nuclear enterprise are extremely important, and we continue to invest in them.

Senator TESTER. And I appreciate that. I appreciate all those investments and that investment.

How about specifically for the ICBMs?

Ms. JAMES. How much did you say?

Senator TESTER. Yes. How much is being invested in there and how important are they as far as the nuclear deterrent?

Ms. JAMES. Give me one second here. If you find it before me, chime in, Chief.

General WELSH. Yes, ma'am.

Senator, we have on the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) side—we have over the FYDP—it is over \$3 billion. We have Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC-3) modernization for almost half a billion. We have New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) work that continues for about \$50 million, a little under that, \$48 million. We have the Minuteman III modernization, moving it to the 400 for New START. That is another \$1.6 billion. We have got the UH-1 recap, et cetera, et cetera. There is a lot in here that has to do with the ICBMs.

Senator TESTER. Well, I think it is important because there are some that think that the ICBMs are no longer relevant, and I believe them to be very much relevant and cost-effective to boot.

So being on the MILCON Subcommittee, a partner of this committee, there is going to be a facility I think in the works for Malmstrom to house a new helicopter fleet by 2019. I bring that date up because in previous questioning, you did not bring up a date certain for those helicopters to arrive and probably for good reason. Can you assure me they will at least be there by 2019?

Ms. JAMES. I would certainly hope so, and I am pushing to make it earlier than that.

C-130 BASING

Senator TESTER. Okay, good. I appreciate that very, very much.

I want to talk a little bit about—the C-130 is one of our favorite topics, and we appreciate all you have done for the Air Guard in that regard. There are some C-130's that are supposed to become available out of the North Carolina base because they are replacing them with C-17's and good on them. But the question is, what do we have to do to get those C-17's? Because they are a little newer model than we have in Montana.

Ms. JAMES. You mean the C-130's?

Senator TESTER. I mean the C-130's. I will take C-17's too as far as that goes.

Senator TESTER. No, the C-130's.

General WELSH. Senator, I am not sure exactly what the distribution plan is for the airplanes that are coming out of Pope Field, North Carolina. Let me go check and I will get back to your office.

Senator TESTER. That would be great.

[The information follows:]

Air Mobility Command is working on a plan for re-basing the C-130J models. We expect that plan to be finalized by May 2016.

Senator TESTER. And in that regard, they have some modular airborne firefighting systems also in North Carolina. And I would just ask this to either one of you. Would you not agree that the best place to put those MAFs are in places where we have a lot of wooded area like west of the Mississippi?

General WELSH. I do not know how to answer that question any other way than yes.

Senator TESTER. Thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Well, look, I mean, I think it makes sense. I look at Senator Murkowski when I say this, but truthfully, I mean, the firefighting happens—it is starting to happen in your neck of the woods more and more, but also west of the Mississippi. And I would hope that you would take that into consideration when you bed those down at their new location because I can tell you that the fire seasons—you know—are getting longer. They are getting more intense. We could absolutely utilize those. We have access to more acreage of forest up there in the State of Montana alone than in the Northeast. So I appreciate that.

I just want to end by saying we would love to have you out in Montana. We are very proud of what you have done and what the airmen have done there. And we look forward to working together and increasing the capabilities and making our Air Force as successful as it can be in the threats that impact us around the world. Thank you.

Ms. JAMES. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. The Senator from Alaska.

F-35 BASING IN ALASKA

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Secretary, General Welsh. Good to see you both.

I want to ask specific questions as they relate to the F-35's. And within your budget request, we have got \$295.6 million in MILCON that is associated with the beddown of the F-35's there at Eielson. We are still waiting for the publication for the final EIS and the record of decision on that. But I can tell you that interior Alaska is very proud, very excited to be the first base to host the F-35's in the Pacific, and Alaskans are looking forward to this. I think you both know that.

We also know that there are some naysayers out there that believe that the plane is not going to be capable of meeting its mis-

sion, not ready within the 2019–2020 time-frame to meet the mission in the Pacific. There are other naysayers that say it is going to be so expensive we are never going to see it materialize in Alaska. I do not think that that is true, and I hope that you do not either. You have mentioned, Secretary James, the fact that you are going to be deferring several of the aircraft in 2017.

But the question that I would ask you this morning is just generally why is it so critical. Why is it so important that the F-35's be placed where we are proposing there in the interior? Why is it necessary to do it now? And do you foresee any other issues that should concern us with either the buy or the capability of the airplane that would cause greater concern? So basically just a status update on the F-35's and on their significance in having them positioned, as has been suggested, in the interior of Alaska.

Ms. JAMES. I would just begin by stating that the capability that the F-35 will bring to us is just very, very important for the Nation as we look to the defense against these so-called high-end threats, and placing them in Alaska, of course, is part and parcel of looking toward the Pacific being prepared to respond to problems that could occur in the Pacific. So Alaska is a very strategic location. I mean, the Chief can talk more about that.

As for how the program is going, please keep in mind it is still a program in development. And if you look back to our other major development programs throughout our history as an Air Force, those too had challenges that had to be overcome. That piece of it is not unusual. So we are working through those challenges. We still believe that we will hit the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in the timeframe that we have previously said.

There are some challenges, though. We worry about the software. We worry about the Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS). But we still think we can overcome and hit that IOC timeframe. We believe the maintenance manning, which was a huge challenge there for a while—we believe we are okay for that now because we are going to use contractors and take some different approaches to help get us over the hump for the IOC, but we are still worried about the full operational capability period because of the maintenance.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Excuse me for interrupting, but can you speak a little bit to that aspect of it? Because it is a critical concern, and knowing that there is going to be an adequate staff of maintenance there—you mentioned contractors. Can you go into a little more detail there for me?

General WELSH. Senator, we have basically thrashed a little bit over the last couple years to figure out how to find maintenance manpower that we had planned to take from other systems. We do not have 1,500 maintainers sitting around waiting for work to transition to the F-35. And when we could not divest other systems to now take that maintenance manpower, we had to figure out where to find active duty maintenance to go to operational units.

So in training units, we are using contractors for temporary periods, we hope, because we have to create deployable blue suit maintainers over time. But as we move through the next 4 to 5 years, we can use contractors at training units for not just the F-35 but other types of aircraft, everything from RPAs to other fighter units,

to take active duty manpower out of those units to create enough to develop F-35 operational units in the initial beddown at Hill Air Force Base, Utah in particular.

As we get closer to full operational capability of this aircraft and we have more squadrons fielding, we need to get at active duty Air Force maintainers and have them available to stand up operational bases like Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, which is why we cannot delay divesting other systems forever.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Specifically the A-10's? How much of an impact has that been?

General WELSH. The A-10 is one of them.

Well, it is an impact, but there are reasons for it. I understand that. And we have adjusted to those impacts. But the adjustments that we are making we cannot continue to make. There are not a lot of other roads we can run down to find more manpower. And as a result, eventually we are going to have to transition maintenance guys out of other systems and put them in the F-35 unless our top line goes up and we are allowed to just grow more Air Force, which I am not anticipating in the next couple years. That is the tension.

As far as why the F-35 now, the airplanes are being fielded. This is not a PowerPoint program anymore. About a year from now, we will have 100 F-35's in our Air Force inventory. We have already flown 45,000 hours on this airplane collectively. We are about 5 years into the rebaselining from 2011, and the milestones we have tracked to have been the milestones from that rebaselining. None of the problems you are hearing about in the paper are new problems. Software has been an issue and the projection is it will be 4 to 6 months behind for the last 4 to 5 years. So we are continuing to grind on these things. We will solve them. I am confident we will reach IOC at the end of this year.

And I am very excited about getting the airplane to Alaska for two reasons. Partners in the Pacific want to buy the F-35. We can train with them in Alaska like we can train very few other places in the world. The range air space there is phenomenal. And that location—as we have talked before, geography does matter. And Alaska is blessed with it. Getting to the Pacific in support of our allies quickly, in support of U.S. interests quickly from there is much easier to do than from other places.

Senator MURKOWSKI. You make my point. Thank you. I appreciate the leadership from both of you and your commitment to serving us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Senator. We appreciate your contributions to the hearing.

We also thank all of our witnesses and their continued assistance to the committee. We are grateful for your service, and we look forward to a continuing dialogue throughout the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senators may submit additional written questions, and we request that if they are submitted to you, we hope you will respond within a reasonable time.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Department for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. DEBORAH LEE JAMES

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

UH-1N REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Question. Secretary James, the Air Force is planning a Milestone C decision for the UH-1N Replacement Program in the second quarter of fiscal year 2017. During the Senate Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee hearing on 10 February, 2016, you were asked to comment on the status of the UH-1N replacement program and you stated that one possibility would be to address the most urgent piece of this requirement, possibly through a sole-source situation. The 2016 OMNIBUS Appropriations Act contained report language that encouraged a competition-based acquisition strategy.

Can you elaborate on the Air Force's acquisition strategy and timeline regarding the UH-1N Replacement Program?

Answer. Consistent with the 2016 Appropriations Act recommendation, the Air Force is pursuing a full and open competitive acquisition strategy for the UH-1N replacement program. We are working to fully define the program content and timeline and anticipate contract award in fiscal year 2018. Additional details will be available when the acquisition strategy is finalized.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER

CONSOLIDATED LODGING OPERATIONS

Question. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process consolidated 26 service-specific stand-alone installations into 12 joint bases in order to take advantage of efficiencies. Most joint bases have consolidated operations—their lodging operations in particular. Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) is one of two joint bases where lodging has not been consolidated, resulting in two operations—one at Fort Sam Houston that was privatized through the Privatized Army Lodging program and another that is operated by the Air Force and continues to be challenged by underfunding and undercapitalization. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), JBSA has yet to fulfill the mission of joint basing, and specifically has not consolidated its lodging. It is my understanding that the Air Force has the authority through the Army's Privatized Army Lodging program and the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) to privatize undercapitalized lodging operations at JBSA. Fully integrating JBSA lodging operations under a single privatized program would allow the Air Force to recapitalize the balance of the JBSA rooms while not diverting appropriated funds away from the lodging program.

What is the timeline for the Air Force to consolidate lodging operations at JBSA?

Answer. The Air Force and Army continue to work joint basing initiatives in pursuit of maximizing efficiencies and persist in reviewing the way each Service manages lodging operations as a standard practice. While the Army views privatized lodging as the appropriate way to recapitalize their lodging program, the Air Force views on recapitalization are substantially different. The Air Force's lodging facilities are in overall good condition. We continue to examine opportunities and models (to include privatized lodging) to improve effectiveness and find even greater efficiencies in managing the Air Force lodging.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SUSAN M. COLLINS

DFAS—LIMESTONE

Question. Secretary James, I recently learned about a very concerning issue at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)—Limestone related to the implementation of the Defense Enterprise Accounting System pilot program. This computer system is intended to streamline processes and provide accurate and timely financial information to customers. I have learned, however, that the system's flaws are causing payment backlogs, increasing staff workloads, and damaging morale. The problems are also increasing personnel costs because staff is required to work overtime to clear the backlogs created by the system. I have been told that despite

the system's flaws, the Air Force intends to deploy the program DFAS-wide in 2017. I do not understand this based on the numbers of flaws and costs associated with the program.

Please explain why the Air Force will not consider delaying further implementation across DFAS until these issues can be better addressed.

Answer. Because Defense Enterprise Accounting and Management System (DEAMS) is essential to the Department of Defense meeting statutory audit readiness requirements, it is important we keep deployment on track. The Air Force is currently reviewing the capability and deployment schedule for DEAMS after a February 2016 review with the Office of Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Milestone Decision Authority. A final schedule is anticipated to be approved and disseminated in July 2016.

The Air Force continues to deliver hardware and software enhancements to improve processing time and reduce workload associated with the payment backlog. The needs of DFAS remain a key consideration and are being taken into account as the schedule is being revised.

JSTARS CAPABILITY GAP

Question. General Welsh/Secretary James—According to your own Analysis of Alternatives completed in 2012, the most cost effective and rapid approach to recapitalize the JSTARS fleet is to integrate mature technologies on an existing business-jet platform. Despite the fact that Congress has supported the AoA and directed the Air Force to accelerate JSTARS recap the last 2 years; the program has repeatedly been slowed down by the Pentagon's internal acquisition bureaucracy.

What are you doing to ensure that this program is fielded quickly to avoid an impending capability gap?

Answer. The December 2015 Milestone A approval was a critical step in recapitalizing JSTARS. Initial operational capability is currently planned for fiscal year 2024. The program is spending more time reducing risk in the early phase of the program to support fielding the right capability as early as possible. The risk reduction work in fiscal years 2015–2017 is critical for program success and provides engineering, decision quality data to inform the program and preserve the option to accelerate the program in the future.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

JSTARS RECAPITALIZATION

Question. General Welsh/Secretary James—According to your own analysis of alternatives (AoA) completed in 2012, the most cost effective and rapid approach to recapitalize the JSTARS fleet is to integrate mature technologies on an existing business-jet platform. Despite the fact that Congress has supported the AoA and directed the Air Force to accelerate JSTARS recap the last 2 years, the program has repeatedly been slowed down by the Pentagon's internal acquisition bureaucracy.

What are you doing to ensure that this program is fielded quickly to avoid an impending capability gap?

Answer. The December 2015 Milestone A approval was a critical step in recapitalizing JSTARS. Initial operational capability is currently planned for fiscal year 2024. The program is spending more time reducing risk in the early phase of the program to support fielding the right capability as early as possible. The risk reduction work in fiscal years 2015–2017 is critical for program success and provides engineering, decision quality data to inform the program and preserve the option to accelerate the program in the future.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROY BLUNT

A-10 DIVESTMENT PLAN

Question. Secretary James and General Welsh, you are well versed in the ongoing discussion regarding the future of the A-10. I am proud to represent the men and women of the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. With the Air Force's decision this year to delay retirement of the A-10 until 2022, at the earliest, I wanted to discuss with you the impact of that decision on maintenance issues regarding the F-35 and F-16.

Can you please describe the new A-10 divestment plan? What is the plan for the F-16s at Hill Air Force Base as more F-35s come online?

Answer. The fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request re-phases A-10 retirement over 5 years beginning with two squadrons in fiscal year 2018. Also in our PB17 request, F-16s at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, are programmed to replace A-10s at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, beginning in fiscal year 2018. As A-10s are retired, pilot and maintenance expertise at Whiteman and Fort Wayne will remain to support the new F-16 mission. We will continue to analyze our force structure and be prepared to make adjustments based on world events, global threats, and fiscal realities.

F-35 MAINTENANCE CHALLENGE

Question. Secretary James and General Welsh, you are well versed in the ongoing discussion regarding the future of the A-10. I am proud to represent the men and women of the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. With the Air Force's decision this year to delay retirement of the A-10 until 2022, at the earliest, I wanted to discuss with you the impact of that decision on maintenance issues regarding the F-35 and F-16.

Can you discuss how the Air Force will manage the impact on F-35 maintenance challenges by keeping the A-10 in service longer?

Answer. Keeping the A-10 longer stresses active-duty maintenance manning and drives the Air Force to support costly end strength increases to support F-35 growth. The Air Force is on track to meet F-35 initial operational capability maintenance manning requirements, but full operational capability by fiscal year 2021 remains at risk. Today, the Air Force has approximately 1,500 F-35 maintainers, but must grow to approximately 6,000 by fiscal year 2021. We do not currently have enough topline funding to support that level of growth. Until manning reaches satisfactory levels, the Air Force plans to mitigate impacts to F-35 maintenance by incrementally increasing end strength and maintenance accessions through fiscal year 2021. The Air Force will also temporarily convert some active-duty positions to contract maintenance, and cross-train approximately 1,100 active-duty maintainers to F-35 units. Finally, the Air Force continues to evaluate Total Force options to optimize F-35 maintenance manning.

WHITEMAN AFB REPLACEMENT MISSIONS

Question. Secretary James and General Welsh, you are well versed in the ongoing discussion regarding the future of the A-10. I am proud to represent the men and women of the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. With the Air Force's decision this year to delay retirement of the A-10 until 2022, at the earliest, I wanted to discuss with you the impact of that decision on maintenance issues regarding the F-35 and F-16.

Can you discuss the plan for replacement missions at bases such as Whiteman and if you still plan to move F-16s to Whiteman Air Force Base in the future?

Answer. The fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request plans to move 27 F-16s to Whiteman AFB, Missouri, in conjunction with the divestment of an equal number of A-10s starting in fiscal year 2018. We will continue to analyze our force structure and be prepared to make adjustments based on world events, global threats, and fiscal realities.

B-2 FLEET SUSTAINMENT

Question. Securing parts and maintaining the high-demand B-2 fleet is critical. I know through the hard work and resourcefulness of the maintenance men and women of the 509th and 131st, aircraft availability statistics are improving.

What would you say contributes to this success? Have they been given all the tools and resources they need to thrive or are they patching problems here and there and still facing the same difficulties?

Answer. Enterprise fleet management and improvements to maintenance processes and procedures are the main contributors to success. Fleet management initiatives include a programmed depot maintenance schedule that reduces the number of aircraft in depot and reduces repair cycle time, keeping more aircraft operationally available. The Air Force has also achieved a 5 to 8 percent aircraft availability increase through investments and streamlining low observable maintenance requirements that maintain the aircraft's stealth characteristics, but replace several maintenance-intensive repair actions that are effective but less complex. Additionally, the Air Force is leveraging manning and experience levels through Total Force Integration with the 131st Bomb Wing of the Missouri Air National Guard.

While aircraft availability is improving, spare parts availability continues to challenge fleet readiness. Supply problems are mitigated through cannibalization of air-

craft components, but long lead time contracts, no-bids for small orders and sub-component obsolescence issues are still affecting parts availability.

B-2 BOMBER

Question. Can you talk a little about the continued focus on the B-2 even as we move forward with the Long Range Strike-Bomber program? I want to ensure that we stay focused on the B-2 even while we transition. As you know, even when the new bomber enters service, which are years away, our Air Force will still seek a big role for the B-2 to meet combatant commander needs. I want to make sure that we do not let our concentration on solving the readiness problems with the B-2 slip while we are tempted to focus on the new, exciting program that is next.

Answer. The B-2 has a projected service life through 2058. To ensure the fleet can accomplish its nuclear and conventional mission in highly defended and anti-access environments, periodic modernization efforts must be and are currently being undertaken to upgrade combat capability. These efforts also improve the viability, supportability, and survivability of the weapon system.

Recent and ongoing investments in avionics, structures, communications, and weapons keep the B-2 viable in the immediate future. Current system upgrades include Low Observable Signature and Supportability Modifications, Defensive Management System Modernization, Flexible Strike, Common Very Low Frequency Receiver, Advanced Extremely High Frequency (Strategic Communications), Extended Range Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile weapon integration, and Military Global Positioning System User Equipment enhancements. We are also exploring opportunities for B-2 architecture updates to reduce future integration costs and improve program affordability.

In short, the B-2 is important to current and future Air Force operations and we are committed to ensuring the fleet is ready when called.

B-2 DEFENSIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Question. In your opinion, is the DMS (Defensive Management System) program on track and helping the part obsolescence issues and where do we stand with the current modernization effort and future funding?

Answer. Yes, the B-2 DMS modernization is on track and helping the part obsolescence issues. The form, fit, function (F3) effort for the legacy DMS hardware (subset of additional parts for receivers and preprocessors) addresses obsolescence issues by maintaining DMS capability until the DMS-M fields in fiscal year 2021.

The DMS modernization program completed the engineering and manufacturing development Milestone B review with the Defense Acquisition Executive on time and is appropriately funded in the fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request.

NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

Question. As there are competing demands for reduced defense spending and with components of the nuclear enterprise reaching their expiration date, can you please discuss why it is important that Congress continue to fund nuclear modernization programs that lie at the foundation to our national security?

Answer. The nuclear triad has underpinned our Nation's ability to maintain strategic stability and deter nuclear attack against the U.S., our allies, and partners for more than 50 years. Many of its delivery platforms and supporting systems have reached or exceeded their intended service lives. Completion of the recapitalization efforts begun by the Department of Defense is vital to ensuring our nuclear deterrent remains credible and effective in the decades ahead.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR STEVE DAINES

COMBAT CONTROLLERS AND PARARESCUEMEN

Question. A 2015 GAO Report recommended “. . . that DOD determine whether opportunities exist to balance deployments across the joint force” in a study on the overuse of Special Operations Forces.

Has the Air Force seen an issue with the current deployment cycle impacting its Combat Controllers and Pararescuemen?

Answer. Yes, there have been significant impacts to both Combat Control and Pararescue Airmen given the sustained deployment cycles since 2001. The deployment/dwell rates are 1 to 1 for both Combat Control and Pararescue. However, it is not only the deployment rates that impact the Airman's time away from home, it is also the lengthy training required to prepare for each deployment. It is very

common for our Combat Control and Pararescue Airmen to average over 220 days away from home every year. Additionally, this high operations tempo continues to degrade mission readiness across the force for these specialties due to the inability to retain the high levels of training required to maintain proficiency for the high risk events these exceptional Airmen execute. Finally, experience levels, and our ability to field our most critical ranks of senior E-6 and E-7 operators have been negatively impacted. We recognize repeated deployments in high risk environments take a toll on our Airmen and their families. Accordingly, we have placed significant emphasis on maintaining the resilience of these Airmen, have seen very positive results, and will continue to be mindful of their health and safety.

FOREST FIRES MISSION SAVES

Question. The Air Force Pararescuemen offer a unique lifesaving set of skills, drastically needed sometimes to assist civilian medical support teams. The Air Force cites over 5000 lives saved for civilian operations, approximately how many of those have been in forest fire missions?

Answer. Air Force Pararescuemen have not participated in forest fire missions.

STATESIDE SAFETY

Question. As our Nation continues to face increased lone-wolf terror attacks, what steps is the Air Force taking to ensure its Airmen are as safe as possible while stateside?

Answer. The safety of the Airmen is our highest priority. A great amount of emphasis has been placed on our ability to integrate with local, Federal and other national government emergency response organizations to improve protection and awareness for our Airmen working and residing off of installations. Through proper use of social media and maintaining operational security we are leveraging modern technologies to reduce notification and response timelines.

We recognize emergency response is only part of the equation, but our personnel and their family's reactions are also extremely important. Through an emerging Air Force Enterprise Emergency Mass Notification System we are able to not only push information out to our populous, but also allow them to push real time notification up the chain via a special duress application which can be loaded onto any mobile device. Notifications from the higher headquarters as well as the individuals in the field are integrated into all major commands as well as into our sister services, the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security communication centers.

Beyond notifications, we educate all our military personnel on the fundamentals of anti-terrorism and open this training up for military families as well. Both the training and policy stress the importance for our personnel to sanitize their social media accounts, personal attire, as well as their personal vehicles to lower their public profile.

Our recruiting stations pose a different challenge. We must maintain a very visible and accessible presence, often in remote and/or impoverished locations without direct oversight of a military installation. In response, we are preparing facility physical security upgrades such as ballistic window protection, closed circuit camera systems, remote door locks/access control systems, as well as an armed on sight presence. In most cases, the armed personnel will be a recruiter armed with a government owned handgun. In locations capable of direct installation support the local Air Force security forces unit will provide an armed presence. In all cases, the use of deadly force will be limited to the protection of self and others in the DOD owned or leased facility.

In the locations where existing facility leases do not allow for the modifications to the building and/or the risk to our personnel is too high, Air Force members are being pulled back to operate out of the nearest military installation.

RETENTION EFFORTS

Question. The Air Force has been cited in the past for having trouble with retaining Airmen during peacetime, especially officers in the nuclear-oriented job fields. What steps has the Air Force taken to correct this issue, and what more can be done to ensure highly trained Airmen are retained?

Answer. The Air Force has experienced overall strong retention over the past 10 years. A review of nuclear missile operator retention rates shows their retention closely mirrors the rest of the line of the Air Force and in many circumstances is better than line of the Air Force over the past 10 years. We utilize force management programs such as special and incentive pays, accession levers, retraining, etc. to address specific and targeted areas that experience poor retention/manning as well as those career fields that have a high training cost, most notably in the Rated

Officer and Battlefield Airmen career fields. With an improving economy and competitive market place, retention has become increasingly important. Your continued support for special and incentive pay budgets as well as increased and flexible authorities to appropriately incentivize our Airmen is appreciated.

The Air Force remains committed to providing the best support to build and retain ready, resilient Airmen and families. Despite constrained budgets, the Air Force chose to restore funding to Airman and family programs in the fiscal year 2016 President's Budget request and continues to sustain that funding in the fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request. The Air Force continues to invest resources to improve quality of life programs targeting the nuclear enterprise community (e.g., specialized programs are available to address the unique child care needs of Airmen and their families deployed to missile sites.)

The Air Force closely tracks the retention of the officer and enlisted force, especially those performing nuclear duty, and will continue to employ the full suite of force management and support programs to ensure retention of our highly trained Airmen.

JSTARS RECAPITALIZATION

Question. Secretary James, according to your own Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) completed in 2012, the most cost effective and rapid approach to recapitalize the JSTARS fleet is to integrate mature technologies on an existing business-jet platform. Despite the fact that Congress has supported the AoA and directed the Air Force to accelerate JSTARS recap the last 2 years; the program has repeatedly been slowed down by the Pentagon's internal acquisition bureaucracy.

What are you doing to ensure that this program is fielded quickly to avoid an impending capability gap?

Answer. The December 2015 Milestone A approval was a critical step in recapitalizing JSTARS. Initial operational capability is currently planned for fiscal year 2024. The program is spending more time reducing risk in the early phase of the program to support fielding the right capability as early as possible. The risk reduction work in fiscal years 2015–2017 is critical for program success and provides engineering, decision quality data to inform the program and preserve the option to accelerate the program in the future.

SECURITY CLEARANCES

Question. The 2015 cyber-attacks against the Office of Personnel Management created an extremely large backlog in the approval of security clearances. What impact has this backlog, and its subsequent delay of clearances, had on the Air Force?

Answer. The Office of Personnel Management backlog severely hinders our ability to maintain cleared personnel for mission critical nuclear, space, and special access programs. The backlog impacts Air Force worldwide deployments, contact with sensitive equipment, and other security requirements underpinning the need for cleared personnel. We are experiencing difficulty getting military intelligence personnel fully trained because they require security clearances prior to accessing classified automation systems and equipment. We are incurring significant costs (unfilled training billets, and charges for extended housing, meals, and medical expenses) because these students cannot complete training until they are cleared.

We have similar issues with new hire civilian personnel who are on the payroll but are unable to perform work in their primary duties for extended times until they obtain their security clearance. The failure to eliminate the backlog of overdue periodic reinvestigations also heightens the risk of national security breaches. Additionally, the delay has impacted Air Force's ability to render final Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 and public trust determinations which are a critical part of securing our personnel, government facilities and data.

CHINESE DEPLOYMENT OF SURFACE TO AIR MISSILES

Question. Imagery made public by a civilian satellite on February 17, 2016 shows that the Chinese Military has deployed surface-to-air missiles on one of its man-made islands in the South China Sea. As you may know, an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade passes through the South China Sea every year. The U.S. Air Force has increased its flights over these islands in recent months, and last November Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said "we conduct B-52 flights in international airspace in that part of the world all the time."

How does the deployment of these surface-to-air missiles impact Air Force flights in the region, and can you confirm the Air Force will continue to treat this area as international airspace?

Answer. Air Force aircraft conduct ongoing operations in the South China Sea area and will continue to exercise our right-to-fly within international airspace, in accordance with international law pertaining to freedom of navigation and overflight. The deployment of these surface-to-air missiles does not change our planned overflights.

PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION ON CYBERSECURITY

Question. Cybersecurity is critical to the Air Force's most potent strategic capabilities and stealth maneuver. However, demand from public and private sectors exceeds supply of the specialized cybersecurity expertise and talent that is difficult to find and harder to keep.

What is the Air Force doing to become competitive with the allure of the private sector's technology cultures to recruit, train, and retain next-generation cybersecurity experts? Similarly, how is the Air Force posturing to collaborate with the private sector companies that often secure the top-notch experts among the cadre of cybersecurity professionals?

Answer. Keeping a competitive edge in the recruitment and retention of cybersecurity experts is vital to the Air Force's ability to meet its strategic objectives. The Air Force has implemented an initial enlistment bonus based on the recruits' highest level of information technology/cybersecurity certification. We have also implemented additional incentives, including Special Duty Assignment Pay and Selective Re-enlistment Bonuses for our enlisted cyber operators. We are also evaluating potential programs focused on our officers in our cyber career fields.

We are working in partnership with the University of Maryland on a program to develop a cyber aptitude assessment. This assessment is envisioned to serve as a screening tool to identify new recruits as well as potential retrainees for cyber warfare operations. Moreover, we are standing up 39 Cyber Mission Force Teams (CMFTs) to include stand-alone Air Reserve Component (ARC) CMFTs as well as ARC augmentation to Active Duty teams enabling us to leverage commercial experience in cyber.

The Air Force continues to collaborate with private sector companies through a force development program called Education with Industry. This program uses a hands-on educational experience to provide students with management and technical expertise as they study best practices with industry leaders. Currently, we have Education with Industry interns assigned to Microsoft, Amazon, VMware and USAA. Additionally, to build enduring relationships with industry, the Air Force stood up a detachment of entrepreneurially-focused Air Force strategists. This team is tasked with discovering new business innovations, technologies, concepts and practices that can benefit various Air Force communities.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JERRY MORAN

CYBER TEAMS

Question. The Air Force has stated they are increasing the number of cyber teams across the force. Will the Air Force consider capacity in the reserve components when making basing decisions for cyber teams?

Answer. Yes, we can, and do, consider the Reserve Components in the process of evaluating options to determine the optimum total force mix for its cyber workforce. Once this mix is known, we will use our strategic basing process to determine basing enterprise and criteria aligned with the preferred total force mix. All Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve cyber assets will be considered, as appropriate. The basing enterprise and criteria will be announced to Congress before entering the next phase of the process.

Question. There appears to be a slow pipeline in training for cyber teams that delays teams in reaching full operational capability. How many cyber teams have reached full operational capability? How does the Air Force intend to address the issue of a slow training pipeline in order to meet the growing demand of trained cyber warriors and reach full operational capability?

Answer. Today, while 3 of 39 (7.7 percent) of Air Force Cyber Mission Force (CMF) teams are at full operational capability, only 49 percent of the Air Force's 216 CMF billets are filled. To improve this, the Air Force has implemented measures to accelerate our training pipeline throughput, to include funding 32 military and civilian schoolhouse instructors, hiring polygraphers to expedite security clearance adjudication and adding special duty pay and higher bonuses for enlisted personnel in cyber operator skill sets. This resulted in a doubling of initial skills training (IST) throughput of key cyber operator positions.

We continue to develop ways to increase accessions, expedite training, and reduce attrition. Current initiatives include: construction of an additional schoolhouse at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas and building renovation at Hurlburt Field, Florida to increase initial qualification training capacity; dedicating the remaining fiscal year 2016 IST enlisted cyber operator (1B4) graduates to only CMF positions; and gaining U.S. Cyber Command joint training equivalency credit based on the curriculum of our Service-level Cyber Warfare Operator course, which could reduce training times for particular joint skill sets by up to nine weeks. Future initiatives we are currently evaluating include: leveraging Air Reserve Component instructors and classrooms; upgrading hardware and software in IST classrooms to accommodate an additional 113 1B4 students in fiscal year 2016; and increasing incentives and pay grades for civilian hires onto joint CMF teams.

Question. The 177th and 127th—as part of the new Cyber Operations Group—at McConnell Air Force Base are struggling to fill vacant and new positions due to resourcing. Please provide an explanation and possible timeline when these units will receive resourcing to fill vacant and new positions.

Answer. Manpower changes in the Cyber Operations Group (177th Information Aggressor Squadron and 127th Cyberspace Operations Squadron) at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, were impacted by the fiscal year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act which placed a hold on manpower movements in Air National Guard cyber units pending a mission analysis of cyber in the Department of Defense and a report containing the results to Congress. The report was completed and turned in September 2014. However, the Air National Guard extended the force structure hold to allow for more thorough development of Cyber Mission Force guidance and establishment of clear budgetary direction. With the passage of fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, the Air National Guard was confident in the overall resourcing of the cyber enterprise and moved forward with planned force structure changes in the cyber mission area. Kansas National Guard leadership received manpower templates for these units in May 2015 and the unit manning documents are being processed and are scheduled for release to the State in April 2016.

JSTARS REPLACEMENT

Question. Recent testimony by Air Force leaders before the House Armed Services Committee indicated that the current state of technology does not support an unmanned platform for JSTARS. Please explain how operational requirements and the current state of the art call for a business jet solution.

Answer. During the 2012 JSTARS Mission Area Analysis of Alternatives (AoA), the Air Force assessed the Battle Management, Command and Control (BMC2) function and Synthetic Aperture Radar/Ground Moving Target Indicator radar requirements across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO). The AoA evaluated 17 alternatives, including large-body manned platforms (i.e., a modernized legacy E-8C, modified KC-46 with sensor and BMC2 suite), a medium-body manned platform with a modern sensor and BMC2 suite, and unmanned systems (e.g., RQ-4 Global Hawk Block 40) paired with a ground-based BMC2 capability. The AoA preferred solution that best balanced mission effectiveness requirements across the ROMO, risk to mission assurance, and life cycle cost was a manned, business-class aircraft with on-board BMC2 and communications suites. Based on planned employment across the ROMO, OSD/CAPE provided a sufficiency review in support of the AoA's preferred solution conclusion.

JSTARS RECAPITALIZATION

Question. That same testimony also indicated that a dialogue with the Combatant Commanders re-validated the importance of airborne battle management, but that those conversations were responsible for the delay that is reflected in the fiscal year 2017 budget request, causing—among other impacts—Initial Operational Capability to slip to 2021.

Please explain how this reduction in funds for fiscal year 2017 (compared to last year's FYDP) will impact the program, and what Congress can do to support accelerated deployment of this technology that Combatant Commanders have confirmed is critical to their operations.

Answer. The conversations that led to the re-validation of the importance of airborne battle management did not cause the change in initial operational capability (IOC) planned for fiscal year 2024. Rather, part of the Milestone A review and decision process, senior Air Force and Department of Defense acquisition leaders assessed the draft JSTARS Recap acquisition strategy and determined we needed more time in the earlier stages of the acquisition to reduce overall program risk. Additionally, the Air Force spent more time analyzing mission area requirements

and their associated costs. As a result, the Technology Maturity Risk Reduction and Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) phases expanded, giving industry more time to mature their system-level designs and allowing the Department of Defense to better understand the mission area cost-capability trade space. We expect the additional time reducing risk and understanding requirements will facilitate a more executable and affordable program.

The fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request was reduced to reflect the anticipated award of the post-Milestone B EMD contract being moved from the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2017 to the first quarter of fiscal year 2018. Although IOC moved from fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2024 in the fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request due to an increase in the duration of EMD, this specific change to contract award and fiscal year 2017 funding does not impact IOC.

Question. In light of the Combatant Commanders' requirements for airborne battle management capabilities, please discuss the importance of JSTARS recap, and explain how the Air Force plans to ensure funding for this program in light of statements suggesting that other platforms represent the Air Force's top priorities.

Answer. We are committed to a JSTARS replacement as soon as realistically possible. The December 2015 Milestone A decision allowed us to move forward with pre-engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) activities, and the results of Technology Maturation and Risk Reduction will help lay a solid foundation for the EMD and subsequent phases of the program. However, the long-term nature of the Budget Control Act, and potential for future sequestration, does cause significant challenges maintaining the warfighting capabilities and capacity the Nation needs. We will work diligently to stay within budget parameters and fund our highest priority modernization, readiness and infrastructure programs.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JON TESTER

FORCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Question. How do you propose to use Force Improvement Program funds in the fiscal year 2017 budget request?

Answer. The Force Improvement Program (FIP) was a highly effective Major Command-led initiative that enabled commanders to address near-term nuclear mission requirements in fiscal years 2014 and 2015. Beginning in fiscal year 2016, many of the recommendations from legacy-FIP were transitioned into the Air Force corporate process, an important milestone that represents the institutionalization of the FIP process. The Air Force's fiscal year 2017 President's Budget request continues robust support for the full-range of near-term nuclear mission requirements as well as long-term recapitalization programs—vital to ensuring the continued credibility and effectiveness of our deterrent forces.

REPLACEMENT OF ARMORED VEHICLES AT MALMSTROM AFB

Question. I appreciate the Air Force's delivery of 43 new vehicles to Malmstrom AFB that are being used to transport our missile, support and maintenance crews. The next step is replacing the aging fleet of armored vehicles used by security forces and mission support personnel out in the field.

What is the Air Force's plan to upgrade its fleet of armored vehicles deployed to the missile fields?

Answer. The long-term plan is to procure the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) for this mission. The Department of Defense recently awarded the contract to Oshkosh Defense Company. In fiscal year 2016, an Air Force JLTV Program Office will be established at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, to facilitate purchase of the vehicles beginning in fiscal year 2019 that will drive deliveries in fiscal year 2020 or 2021. In the interim, the use of existing up-armored vehicles and a limited purchase of commercial armored tactical vehicles will meet the mission requirements until JLTV is fully fielded.

NEW MISSILE ALERT FACILITIES

Question. It's my understanding that construction to replace our Missile Alert Facilities is currently slated to begin in fiscal year 2019. As you know, the current facilities were built in the early 1960s and are increasingly vulnerable, unsafe and unhealthy for the airmen. As a result, leadership at Malmstrom has told me that mission efficiency and capability are reduced.

Has the Air Force considered expediting these critical investments in new Missile Alert Facilities?

Answer. Yes, the Air Force has considered the timing of all nuclear infrastructure investments to ensure credible nuclear deterrence. There are significant nuclear infrastructure investments for Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, in the President's Budget request and several that begin in fiscal year 2017. An example is the \$14.6 million project submitted in the fiscal year 2017 President's Budget Request to relocate the missile maintenance facility at Malmstrom AFB to house transport erector vehicles, missile field response vehicles, and store missile maintenance equipment and parts. The current missile maintenance facilities operate out of a hangar that was identified as the beddown for UH-1N replacement, requiring relocation to a new facility. Additionally, a \$95 million weapons storage facility project is currently programmed for fiscal year 2019.

JSTARS RECAPITALIZATION

Question. It's my understanding the legacy JSTARS fleet has the most flight hours of any Air Force aircraft at over 58,000 hours, and that the average age of the airframe is 47 years old. Can you comment on the status of the legacy fleet and why it is critical to move forward with the JSTARS recapitalization program? Given how important the JSTARS capability is to the warfighter and the Combatant Commands, why does the recapitalization program continue to get delayed?

Answer. JSTARS recapitalization is absolutely necessary for the Air Force to continue to provide this high demand capability to our combatant commanders. The current fleet is aging and sustainment costs of the legacy fleet are increasing beyond the Air Force's ability to afford them.

The current fleet has the highest average flight hours in the Air Force (highest 58k) with an aircraft availability rate (43.7 percent fiscal year 2016 year-to-date) that is steadily decreasing and depot maintenance schedule that is ballooning due to age-related issues. E-8C service life projections and the JSTARS recapitalization schedule are interdependent and must be closely managed to meet warfighters' needs. The first operational E-8C is currently predicted to achieve 100 percent of service life in late 2017; however, service life projections can change based on usage. The Air Force is currently conducting a study to more accurately determine JSTARS fleet service life.

The JSTARS Recapitalization program was initiated in fiscal year 2015 achieving a materiel development decision in April 2015, then a Milestone A decision 8 months later. Senior Air Force and Department of Defense acquisition leaders assessed the draft JSTARS recapitalization acquisition strategy and decided to invest additional time in the earlier stages of the acquisition to reduce overall program risk, and analyze mission area requirements and their associated costs. As a result, the technology maturity risk reduction and engineering and manufacturing development phases expanded, giving industry more time to mature their system-level designs. We expect the additional time reducing risk and understanding requirements will facilitate a more executable and affordable program. The Air Force remains fully committed to recapitalizing the E-8C fleet.

Question. The JSTARS recapitalization program was meant to be an integration effort using existing mature technologies and inserting them onto a business jet platform. Instead the Pentagon's acquisition bureaucracy has turned what was meant to be a rapid integration program into a traditional development program adding years of schedule and forcing a capability gap for the Combatant Commands.

What are you doing to reverse this disturbing acquisition trend for JSTARS recap? What can be done to move the program faster? How fast could you go if you pursued JSTARS Recap as a Rapid Acquisition Program?

Answer. The Air Force and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) are working hard to fully understand technical risks associated with the program and to ensure the Acquisition Strategy addresses those risks. The Air Force and OSD have also been addressing the affordability of the JSTARS recapitalization program in light of the current budget environment. The deliberate approach supports our objective of having an executable and affordable program. The Air Force will continue to look at opportunities to accelerate the fielding of this capability as we go forward. The fastest way to get to initial operational capability is to have an executable program with a solid risk mitigation plan, as reflected by the existing acquisition strategy.

Question. If you don't get JSTARS Recap moving quickly, doesn't it risk getting lost in the modernization bow wave the Air Force faces with F-35, Tanker, and Long-Range Strike Bomber?

Answer. We are committed to a JSTARS replacement as soon as realistically possible. The December 2015 Milestone A decision allowed us to move forward with pre-engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) activities, and the results

of Technology Maturation and Risk Reduction will help lay a solid foundation for the EMD and subsequent phases of the program. However, the long-term nature of the Budget Control Act, and potential for future sequestration, does cause significant challenges maintaining the warfighting capabilities and capacity the Nation needs. We will work diligently to stay within budget parameters and fund our highest priority modernization, readiness and infrastructure programs.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

FUNDING ENERGY EFFORTS

Question. The Air Force is breaking ground on a project this year at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam that will use utility-scale clean power, battery storage, and smart grid technologies to protect the Hawaii Air National Guard's ability to do its job if and when there is a disruption to the civilian electric grid. It is a great example of where we should continue to move.

How is the Air Force making it easier for base commanders to use their own operating funds, not research and development funds, to invest in energy efforts that are already proven to support the Air Force's war fighting mission?

Answer. The Air Force is pursuing both direct and third-party financing options to develop energy projects that optimize energy and enhance mission assurance through energy assurance. As part of this initiative, the Air Force established the Air Force Office of Energy Assurance (OEA) in February 2016. The OEA provides the Air Force with strategic energy agility and support to installation commanders. It is a central program office dedicated to the development, implementation, and oversight of privately-financed, large-scale renewable and alternative energy projects. The OEA leverages partnerships with the Army and Navy, taking an enterprise-wide approach to identify and facilitate energy projects that provide resilient, cost-effective, and cleaner power to Air Force installations.

The Air Force is currently facing risk in its Facilities, Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization accounts. Unable to meet our requirements in this area, we are focusing limited resources on "mission critical, worst-first" facilities. To partially mitigate this risk, the OEA and the Air Force Civil Engineer Center will apply available congressional authorities, such as utilities privatization, power purchase agreements, and third-party financed projects (e.g., Energy Savings Performance Contracts, etc.) to help installation commanders fully leverage utility dollars.

MAUI SPACE SURVEILLANCE SITE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING CENTER

Question. Secretary James, as we discussed, the Air Force is responsible for tracking objects in space and protecting our satellites from space debris and threats from potential adversaries. I worry, however, that our ability to assess threats in "real-time" is not sufficient for protecting our satellites from a peer competitor during a time of heightened tensions or conflict. On Maui, the Space Surveillance Site and the High Performance Computing Center could improve our response capability, but they are not being used to their full potential.

Would the Air Force consider connecting the supercomputer on Maui to high security networks so the data collected at the Maui Space Surveillance Site can be used in "real-time" to send alerts about potential threats to our satellites?

Answer. The Maui High Performance Computing Center (MHPCC) has been used by Air Force Space Command in recent history (2010) and capability analysis for future Space Surveillance Network (SSN) architectures has been conducted using the SSN Analysis Model.

While AFRL is responsible for the daily operations of the MHPCC, the center is one of five Department of Defense Supercomputing Resource Centers administered by the Army as part of the DOD High Performance Computing Modernization Program (HPCMP). The Air Force and Army have a strong collaborative relationship in developing and shaping the future of the MHPCC as part of the overall HPCMP program, and we have shared your ideas about connecting the MHPCC computers to the higher classification network with HPCMP leadership; we would be happy to put your staff in contact with them as well.

Of note, there are times when satellite owners request data to be collected that they will only allow to be processed in their own mainland facilities due to a higher classification level requiring an SCI network.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SUSAN M. COLLINS

JSTARS RECAPITALIZATION

Question. General Welsh—I understand that the legacy JSTARS fleet has the most flight hours of any Air Force aircraft at over 58,000 hours and that the average age of the airframe is 47 years old.

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JSTARS ACQUISITION TREND

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

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Question. General Welsh—Last December, you were quoted in saying that “if the AF can't fund JSTARS in fiscal year 2017, it'll make the fiscal year 2018 budget.” The fiscal year 2017 presidential budget slates \$128 Million dollars towards the JSTARS recapitalization program. Do you still feel confident that the JSTARS replacement will still meet the 2023 Initial Operating Capability as planned, given this year's proposed spending level?

Answer. JSTARS recapitalization initial operational capability is currently planned for fiscal year 2024. The fastest way to get to initial operational capability is to have an executable program with a solid risk mitigation plan, as reflected by the existing acquisition strategy. The Air Force will continue to look at opportunities to accelerate the fielding of this capability as we go forward.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROY BLUNT

MILITARY FAMILY STABILITY ACT

Question. General Welsh, I am sure during your storied career you have personally experienced, or had Airmen under your command who could have benefited from such legislation. Could you discuss any examples you experienced during your career in the Air Force where this legislation would have been valuable?

Answer. Almost every day, I have the opportunity to learn and see the outcome of the current efforts we have in place that ease the relocation challenges our Air Force members and families experience, especially during my travels to installations and conversations with spouses and family members.

The Air Force is fortunate to have in place numerous avenues to help our Airmen during permanent change of station. These existing laws and policies are more inclusive of the unique operational requirements of our personnel and allow us to be more responsive to our members.

While I support the intent of this legislation to provide for more military family stability as a subset of family readiness, the feasibility and cost of implementing this legislation continues to be a significant concern.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR STEVE DAINES

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QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

PACIFIC CYBER CAPABILITIES

Question. Given the Importance of the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific to the Joint Force, do you think the Air Force is sufficiently investing in the cyber capabilities it needs to protect our forces from the threats we face from potential competitors and adversaries in the region? How does the Air Force plan to bolster its cyber capabilities in the Pacific to deter and defeat those asymmetric capabilities that our adversaries are developing?

Answer. The Air Force is increasing its investment in the cyberspace enterprise to \$4.0 billion in fiscal year 2017 and \$20 billion over the Future Years Defense Program. This will allow us to finish building our 39 defensive and offensive Cyber Mission Force teams to full operational capability, improve Air Force network defensibility, and fund initiatives to better train and retain highly-technical Total Force cyberspace Airmen. We have also launched Task Force Cyber Secure integrating cyber activities throughout the Air Force. In the Pacific, we are continuing to develop offensive/defensive capabilities, integrating cyber operations into joint warfighting plans, and making cyber operations more inclusive in allied/partner exercises. In addition, the Air Force is a full partner in building the joint information environment further enhancing defensibility, situational awareness, and management of our Pacific installations' computer networks.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator COCHRAN. The Defense Subcommittee will reconvene on Wednesday, February 24, at 10:30 a.m. to receive testimony from the Department of the Army. Until then, the subcommittee stands in recess.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 10, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 24.]