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**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST**

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mike Rogers [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Today we continue our fiscal year 2025 budget hearings with the Department of the Air Force. I thank our witnesses for being here, and for their service to our nation. The fiscal year 2025 budget request for the Air Force and the Space Force represents about a two percent increase over fiscal year 2024, but when you account for inflation that increase is actually a cut.

And that means tough decisions had to be made about what programs to cut, and what level of risk to absorb. And like we heard from the Army yesterday, it means the Air Force and Space Force are forced to absorb a lot of risk in the near future as they try to keep delivery of out year capabilities on track. For the Air Force that means hundreds of aircraft are grounded on any given day due to insufficient funding for spare parts.

It means divesting one hundred and thirty aircraft in fiscal year 2025 to save operating costs. And it means cutting the planned buys of new cutting edge fighter aircraft. For the Space Force it means delays in replacing legacy systems with more advanced and resilient systems. It means we are not making investments we need to replace current air missions with new more survivable space based platforms.

And it means we are not acquiring the counter space capabilities at the pace we need to fight and win in space. That is a problem, because China's military modernization isn't slowing down. They have already outpaced us with a larger navy, soon they will have a larger air force. And in space, China is rapidly fielding new capabilities designed to prevent our joint force from operating.

It is important to understand how much risk our services are taking on as a result of this budget, and what that means for our ability to deter China, Russia, and our other adversaries. General Saltzman, I was glad to see the Space Force release its commercial space strategy. Since 2013 this committee has been consistent in

urging the Department to take more advantage of commercial space.

Back then it was just satellite communications, but in the last decade we have seen an explosion of opportunities in the commercial space sector. In these times of limited budgets, leveraging those commercial resources will be even more important than it has been in the past. It will help us increase our capacity and our resiliency. I am also interested in sharing more about the plan to move the core space mission from the Air Guard to the Space Force.

Especially how the plan will not cause Guard personnel and units to move out of affected states, and how the Space Force's new personnel system could benefit those guardsmen who choose not to transfer. Finally, this committee will be closely monitoring progress on the modernization of our nuclear triad. While the B-21 and the LRSO Programs continue to make good progress, the Sentinel Program's Nunn-McCurdy breach is very concerning.

This committee understands how unique and challenging this program is, the Air Force hasn't undertaken a project like this since the deployment of the Minuteman in the 1960s. Never the less, the Department must do more to anticipate challenges, and overcome them early when they emerge. We need to get this right. As Chinese and Russian nuclear arsenals continue to grow, the need for a modern and flexible nuclear triad only becomes more acute.

And with that, I yield to my friend the ranking member for any opening statement he may have.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Chairman did an excellent job of summarizing exactly the challenges in the area of our witnesses today. I want to thank the secretary, and our two chiefs of staff joining us this morning. But I mean, the best way to sum it up, you have to modernize in an incredibly tight budget environment, and I want to compliment all three of you for the work you have done to try to address that challenge.

To really look at it holistically, and make a big change to reflect the great power competition that you are facing, and what does that mean for how you need to develop the force going forward. And I know the budget environment makes that even more difficult, but that is what we have to do, modernize within whatever budget is that is presented to us. So, I think the leadership on that has been enormously helpful, and I appreciate that.

And I want to just sort of foot stomp a couple of points the chairman made. One, on the being able to divest of aging platforms that aren't serving our purposes anymore, that are driving costs, that is the only way that we are going to be able to afford to modernize in the way that we modernize. Also, I do want to hear from you gentlemen about your personnel challenges, it has been theme across the services.

Recruitment has been difficult, we have our task force on quality-of-life issues that Don Bacon and Chrissy Houlahan did an out-

standing job of leading, that tries to present a better offer for our service members, and to meet the challenges they face. But I do want to hear how that is working within the Air Force and the Space Force. On the Space Force, it is just so crucial to everything we do.

Information systems are the heart of literally everything we do in defense, and space is the linchpin of all of that. So, I echo the chairman's remarks about how important it is to put up the best systems, develop our counter-space capabilities, and crucially, on the last point the chairman made on partnering with commercial entities, that is our great advantage in this country.

Whatever the Chinese may be doing with their defense, they do not have our private industry or our level of innovation, even today. If we can partner with those innovative companies with those new technologies, particularly in space and information systems, that gives us the ability to meet the rather steep challenges that we face. And lastly, I do want to also emphasize the last point on the nuclear problem.

When we are looking at a tight budget, and we are looking at the cost of the Sentinel Program right now, I sincerely hope, that as you are looking at the options, as is required when a Nunn-McCurdy breach happens, that you really aggressively look at all of the options. And just like with your modernization effort, you moved forward out of past thinking, you say okay, what are we facing today, and how do we meet those challenges?

I hope you do the same when you look at the future of our nuclear triad, and where it makes sense to spend the money. Because all the money we are spending there could be spent to help deal with some of the challenges that you are facing in terms of updating the platforms, and meeting our space needs, and our air needs. So, I hope you will consider that.

With that I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Ranking Member. Now I would like to introduce our witnesses today. We have the Honorable Frank Kendall, Secretary of the Air Force. General Chance Saltzman, chief of space operations. And General David Allvin is the chief of staff of the Air Force. Thank you all for being here.

We will start with you, Secretary Kendall, you are now recognized.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK KENDALL, SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

Secretary KENDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, members of the committee, General Saltzman, General Allvin, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Department of the Air Force's fiscal year 2025 budget submission. The Department of the Air Force budget submission supports the national defense strategy. We appreciate the committee's support for the fiscal year 2024 NDAA, and the recently enacted fiscal year 2024 budget.

Your efforts to secure timely passage are deeply appreciated. As you aware, the six month delay has had a real impact. That time cannot be recovered, but at least we can now move forward with our urgent modernization priorities. As I have testified before this

committee repeatedly, time is my greatest concern. We are in a race for military technological superiority with a capable pacing challenge.

Our cushion is gone, we are out of time. As we have briefed the committee at a classified level, the pacing throughout moves steadily forward. I want to go off script for a moment to make points. One is I want to recognize the tremendous achievement of our airmen, and guardians, and our entire joint force, and our partners over the weekend in engaging all those targets that Iran -- all those systems that Iran threw at Israel.

It was a remarkable accomplishment. I want to make one other point about it though. What Iran encountered was a highly contested environment, and what we face with China is a highly contested environment. And what I am dedicated to, and what we are all dedicated to here is ensuring that the U.S. never has a result like Iran had in its attempt to attack Israel.

That is what is driving a lot of what we are doing. That is why it is so important to move on from legacy systems that weren't designed for that type of environment to ones that are designed for it, and are capable of coping with that. Continued failure to provide on time authorities and appropriations will leave the Air Force and Space Force inadequately prepared.

We know the committee recognizes this, we appreciate your strong bipartisan support. Our fiscal year 2025 budget request complies with the Fiscal Responsibility Act. We are requesting two hundred and seventeen billion for the Department of the Air Force, including one hundred and eighty-eight billion for the Air Force, and twenty-nine billion for the Space Force.

The budget reflects an increase of about one and a half percent, a little lower than you said, Chairman, over the enacted fiscal year 2024 budget, and does not keep pace with inflation, as you noted, or with the seven percent publicly acknowledged growth of China's military budget. To stay within the levels of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, the DAF had to adjust our previous plans.

The DAF (Department of the Air Force) 2025 budget request seeks to preserve the momentum behind our modernization efforts, particularly the work on operational imperatives that we initiated, that this committee supported in fiscal year 2024. In order to preserve modernization, we have marginally reduced procurement in the Air Force, and have sustained our foundational accounts at levels we deemed acceptable, but no more.

Because the Space Force budget is dominated by research and development accounts, we have had to marginally reduce the pace and scope of our Space Force modernization efforts. Our first priority in the national defense strategy remains the defense of the homeland, which the Department of the Air Force supports through investments in domain awareness, air and space defense, early warning, and cyberspace defense programs.

Our second priority is to deter strategic attacks against the United States, our allies, and our partners. The Department budget request prioritizes nuclear modernization to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. Notably, the Sentinel ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) Program has experienced

unacceptable cost and schedule increases, and is currently undergoing a Nunn-McCurdy review.

The Department of the Air Force will work closely with the committee as that review reaches its conclusions. The third priority is to deter aggression, and be prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary. The Department of the Air Force needs immediate and significant capability in modernization to keep pace with the growing military capabilities of the PRC.

The DAF operational imperatives, and closely related cross cutting operational enablers continue to guide our modernization program. Our budget request includes six billion for these efforts. Finally, the fourth national defense strategy priority is to build a resilient joint force and enduring advantages.

This budget request invests to ensure that we can recruit and retain the force we need so that our airmen, and guardians, and their families have the quality of life they deserve, and can serve to their full potential. As we have briefed the committee, the Department is also currently undertaking a department wide effort to re-optimize to meet the demands of great power competition.

The intent is to minimize both cost impacts, and personnel or unit movement under this initiative. We will work closely with the committee as we develop detailed plans. We do not anticipate any significant impact on the fiscal year 2025 budget, and we have not requested funds for this purpose. The DAF also deeply appreciates the committee's support for the DOD(Department of Defense) QuickStart Initiative that was enacted last year in the NDAA(National Defense Authorization Act).

The Department of the Air Force has obtained approval from the secretary of defense for two programs that will be initiated under this new authority. They are a more resilient national position navigation and timing capability, and C3 battle management for moving target indication. Time matters, but so do resources. The United States is facing a competitor with national purchasing power that now exceeds our own, a challenge we have never faced in modern times.

China is actively developing and expanding capabilities to challenge strategic stability, attack our critical space systems, and defeat our ability to project power, especially air power. Conflict is not inevitable, but it could happen at any time. General Allvin and I just returned from a trip to some of our key bases in the Indo-Pacific. We should all be very proud of our men and women serving in harm's way, and doing everything they can to deter and be ready for a conflict unlike any we have seen before.

The DAF 2025 budget is focused on addressing these realities. We commit to working with the committee to secure timely enactment of this budget. Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kendall, General Saltzman, and General Allvin can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
General Saltzman, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHANCE SALTZMAN, CHIEF OF
SPACE OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE**

General SALTZMAN. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for your continued support, and for the opportunity to testify on the Space Force's posture for fiscal year 2025. As the Space Force prepares to celebrate its fifth birthday, we are wholly dedicated to the work of forging a service purpose built for great power competition.

Space has never been more critical to the security of our nation, and the success or failure of the joint force depends heavily upon the capabilities we present. It is our responsibility to contest and control the domain, to defend U.S. space capabilities, and to protect the joint force from space enabled attack. Gaining and maintaining space superiority is the purpose for which the Space Force was established.

With about three percent of the Department of Defense budget, the Space Force offers a tremendous value proposition for the nation. Every dollar invested in space brings asymmetric returns, but that means every dollar cut creates asymmetric risk. Against a near peer adversary, space superiority is the linchpin. Without it, we cannot deter conflict. Without it, we cannot provide vital effects.

And without it, we cannot protect the joint force. Until we have built the infrastructure to achieve space superiority, the Space Force is a work in progress. The Space Force's theory of success includes three parts. Avoiding operational surprise, denying the benefits of attack in space, and conducting responsible counter-space activities.

The Space Force budget request is designed to support the national defense strategy by building, training, and equipping the forces the nation needs to perform each activity, preserving freedom of action in space while deterring and denying adversarial objectives. Avoiding operational surprise requires us to maintain an accurate understanding of the space domain at all times.

Eight point three percent of our budget is dedicated to this aim. Operating across disaggregated sensor frameworks, the Space Force provides the maximum information possible to decision makers from the tactical to the strategic level. Denying the benefits of an attack in space demands that we make any attack against U.S. capabilities impractical and self defeating. Forty-three point four percent of our budget is devoted to this objective.

Investing in resiliency for missile warning and tracking, satellite communications, position navigation and timing, hybrid architectures, and proliferated constellations impose a hefty cost on aggression. Finally, responsible counter-space activities describes the mechanism by which the Space Force contests and controls the space domain. The fiscal year 2025 budget dedicates twenty-four point seven percent of the Space Force budget to space superiority.

Within the constraints of the FRA fiscal year 2025 Space Force budget re-elects hard choices to maintain legacy space services, preserve current readiness, but it also slows the fielding of a modernized force. Addressing these challenges depends on guardians that are trained and ready to meet high tech demands of space operations. For that reason, I would like to personally thank the com-

mittee for its support for the Space Force Personnel Management Act.

This will be a major force multiplier in the Space Force's efforts to modernize the way we recruit, build, and retain talent. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Space Force's fiscal year 2025 budget and posture. And even in the face of accelerating threats, the Space Force remains the preeminent military space organization in the world. And with the support of this committee, our guardians will preserve and expand our strategic advantage, and we will step up to meet our pacing challenge.

So long as you continue to trust and invest in your space service, the Space Force will respond with unparalleled value for the Nation. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kendall, General Saltzman, and General Allvin can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General Saltzman.
General Allvin, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID ALLVIN, CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

General ALLVIN. Good morning, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished members of this committee. Today I am proud to represent the six hundred and seventy-seven thousand total force airmen serving our nation. I want to thank you for your unyielding support not only to those airmen, but to their families as well. I would like open by stating my immense pride in the exemplary performance of our airmen this past weekend.

As part of a joint coalition effort they successfully thwarted massive air attack by Iran on Israel's home soil. Their professionalism and skill turned a potentially catastrophic event for Israel into a strategic defeat for Iran and its proxies. As you look across the strategic landscape, we find ourselves in a time of significant consequence.

The simultaneous demands of strategic competition with an aggressive and increasingly capable PRC (People's Republic of China), and the persistent acute threats from around the globe require the Air Force to maximize the readiness of today's forces, while adapting our structures and processes to offer the best opportunity to prevail in an environment of enduring great power competition.

Time is not on our side. The fiscal year 2025 Air Force budget reflects difficult choices. We have made trade offs to keep the Air Force's operational readiness today at the minimum acceptable to meet the nation's demands, while seeking to preserve the previous advances in modernization. The Air Force budget also invests in the Air Force's most precious asset, its airmen, to ensure they remain the decisive advantage on which the nation depends.

Strategic deterrence is a key priority for our national defense strategy, and the United States Air Force remains committed to the recapitalization of our nuclear force. We are actively supporting the process triggered by the Nunn-McCurdy breach of the Sentinel Program, and will continue to pursue the path of the safe, secure,

reliable, and effective ground leg of the nuclear triad well into the future.

Our ability to support the national defense strategy priority of deterring aggression and prevailing conflict demands a modern Air Force that is connected to the joint force, and can close multiple kill chains in minimal time to control the tempo of a complex fight with a peer competitor. To that end, the fiscal year 2025 proposal continues investments in the F-35, and the F-15EX, albeit with fewer than preferred quantities dictated by the constraints of the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

We remain committed to the advanced battle management system, and the next generation air dominance family of systems, particularly collaborative combat aircraft, which will allow the Air Force to deliver the affordable mass required to be effective against a very capable PRC. We are also committed to building forward basing resilient enough to enable continued sortie generation even under attack.

To arrest the decline in our readiness, we have proposed modest increased investments in flying hours, and the weapon system sustainment funding to support them while prioritizing investments in critical infrastructure in both physical and cyber. Our airmen are, and always will be the decisive factor in any conflict our Air Force faces, and we are committed to their health, development, and quality of life.

We have made significant progress thanks to Congress' support to increase base pay, adjust basic allowance for housing and subsistence to account for macro economic factors. There is still work to be done. During our recent trip to the Indo-Pacific, Secretary Kendall and I saw dedicated airmen eager to accomplish their mission, despite infrastructure degradation caused by natural disaster and persistent environmental challenges, as well as limited access to healthcare enjoyed by most CONUS bases.

The job of your Air Force has not changed since its inception. Support the defense of this nation through credible deterrence and unmatched combat prowess. To preserve that level of deterrence, we must maintain our readiness today, modernize our force for tomorrow, and provide the absolute best support to our airmen. Success on any battlefield is a team effort.

So, I want to thank the members of Congress and this committee for your past and continued support. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kendall, General Saltzman, and General Allvin can be found in the Appendix on page 63.]

The CHAIRMAN. I thank all the witnesses for their statements.

And I recognize myself for questions. Secretary Kendall, the others can pitch in if they want to, but we have talked about the tight fiscal top line, and that there is going to be the risk that you have to assume making these numbers work, particularly when it comes to our ability to effectively deter China, Russia, and Iran. Can you talk briefly about some of the risks that you're assuming with this?

Secretary KENDALL. I outlined it in my opening comment a little bit, but the first thing is that we have the most powerful military in the world, and we are going to continue to have the most power-

ful military in the world. So, we are able to meet the requirements of our combatant commanders, and provide them with the forces that they would need both in normal operations, and in a contingency, but that is being challenged, of course, by China in particular.

And that is a lot for us to do simultaneously, there are a lot of commitments the United States has around the world. So, basically what we have done under the constraints of the Fiscal Responsibility Act is to fund the current force, personnel with an adequate raise, maintaining quality of life for people, maintaining the force structure basically that we have at a level which we think is acceptable risk, a floor below which we really do not want to go.

That leaves us with a certain amount of resources for modernization, and modernization is divided between procurement and research and development. So, there is the force you have, which we have at the level where we can accept the risk, we are taking a little bit of risk in procurement, we are scaling that back modestly from what we had previously planned in order to get on with the modernization, the R&D part of the budget, which we have to get to remain competitive.

I see the risk increasing significantly over time, I have watched China modernize for about twenty years now. They are building a military designed to defeat the United States, that is the purpose of their military, and we have got to respond to that, and we have got to do it aggressively, and as fast as we can. So, from my perspective, getting that modernization funded, and moving it forward is the highest priority.

But in the meantime, we have to take care of the forward force, and we do need to recapitalize at a reasonable rate to address the mid-term risk. So, that is overall the balance that we are trying to strike.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. General Saltzman, I understand there are approximately five hundred and eighty air national guardsmen in six states and D.C. that currently perform the federal space mission for the Space Force under Title X authority. I understand the administration proposes to transfer these personnel to the Space Force. Is it accurate that under your proposal these five hundred and eighty personnel will have the option to transfer to the Space Force?

If they transfer, they will still report to the same duty station, no units will be removed out of the effective state, and choosing to transfer could provide these guardsmen with a better system of benefits under the Space Force's new hybrid personnel structure?

General SALTZMAN. Thank you, Chairman, for that question, and it is true. I think the best way to take care of these missions, and the people that are currently doing them in the Air National Guard is to integrate them into the Space Force. With the authorities granted by congress through the SFPMA, we now have the ability to manage part time personnel.

And when I evaluate the missions that are currently in the Air National Guard, there is no reason to change those unit structures, the personnel, the make-up of part time to full time, or the location of those units. So, the transition end should be seamless from a mission standpoint, and from a personnel standpoint.

The CHAIRMAN. Great. General, I am interested in hearing how you plan to put into action the new commercial space strategy, and specifically how you plan to change the requirements process so that the commercial products and services are fully considered.

General SALTZMAN. Thank you again. We are excited about the commercial space strategy. As we have known for a long time, it is one of our asymmetric advantages in the U.S., is the power of innovation, and that engine of ingenuity that is in the commercial industry, and especially in space at this time. And so, we wrote the commercial space strategy around four lines of effort intended to get the most out of it.

Trying to create more collaborative transparency, we have to know what the commercial offerings are in order to take advantage of them. And the commercial industry has to understand what our challenges are to best prioritize where they invest, and how they can present capabilities to us for inclusion into our architectures. Operational and technical integration, we can't just think about this purely as adding capacity.

We have to start thinking about them as filling some gaps, and being fully integrated both technically and operationally into our systems. The third line of effort is risk management. We have to understand what we should preserve organically as inherently governmental services. We don't want to miss on those no fail missions, and so we are taking a very deliberate approach to assuring we pull the right kinds of capabilities in.

And then lastly we have to secure the future. There is so much work being done looking out into the future about what space could offer. And so, we want to make sure we are prioritizing our S&T dollars to go after the highest pay off technologies across the industry to fill gaps in the future for the Space Force.

The CHAIRMAN. Great, thank you.

And I yield the time to the ranking member.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot to ask about, I am just going to focus on one set of questions in a moment, but I really want to emphasize what Secretary Kendall said in the opening. I think what we saw in the Iranian attack on Israel is a really good way to frame your challenge, and the broader challenge of the overall military.

Which is we have to make sure that whatever we have can actually get in and hit our targets, while at the same time defending against it. And that is an incredibly complex web, as we saw. I mean, we had jet fighters up there taking out some of the missiles, electronic warfare is a huge part of this, blocking signals, using drones, it is incredibly complicated, and it is all about staying one step ahead with the technology.

So, to General Saltzman's point on the last thing about using our innovative capabilities to do that, that is what we are trying to invest in, and where we really need to put our focus. The one thing I really want to drill down, and in full disclosure, Mr. Garamendi cannot be here today, which I know breaks your heart. But he asked on his behalf that I drill down a little bit, and also I am genuinely concerned about it, on the Sentinel Program.

When we are looking at the budget challenges that we have, and I share the chairman's frustration, but at the same time we have

a trillion-dollar deficit, we have a thirty-three trillion dollar debt, we have to live within the budget we have. Does the triad still make sense given the amount of money that is going to have to go into re-upping? And in short of that, are there alternatives that could be less costly?

Because I believe the Nunn-McCurdy breach has the Sentinel Program roughly thirty-five to forty billion dollars over budget. I would ask you the leading question, what could you do with forty billion dollars? But I won't, because I know you could do a lot with it. But as you look at this, I hope you seriously consider what is the true value of the land based leg of the triad, and what is it going to cost to try to maintain that?

Is there a more cost effective way to do that? And Secretary Kendall, and General Allvin, I would like you both to comment on that.

Secretary KENDALL. First of fall, I am recused on the program because of a prior industry association, but I can talk about the triad in general.

Mr. SMITH. Yeah.

Secretary KENDALL. I did have an opportunity to talk to Congressman Garamendi at length about this the other day, so I had a preamble for this. The triad has served us well for many decades, it has kept us from a nuclear war for a very long time, and you cannot put a value price tag on that. The ICBM --

Mr. SMITH. How?

Secretary KENDALL. The ICBM leg of the triad is the most responsive leg of the triad. It is probably the -- what you try to do with a triad is force an adversary to confront a problem for which there is no easy solution. If you take out one leg, there are two other legs, even if you take out two legs, the third leg still has a lot of destructive power that you can't ignore. And the three legs have different characteristics.

The submarines have good stealth characteristics, and good survivability because of that. The bombers have more flexibility in terms of how they are used, and the ICBMs are on alert, and ready to go in large numbers at a moment's notice. That combination presents a very difficult problem to an adversary, and again it has served us well. The other part of your question about alternatives, I did the Milestone A decision for Sentinel.

And we knew there was widespread uncertainty about the cost at the time, now that uncertainty is sort of coming home to confront us now. When a program has a fifty percent cost increase, you have to go re-look at the value proposition. The Nunn-McCurdy process requires us to do that. I am not directly involved, Under Secretary LaPlante is running that, and my under secretary and acquisition executive are participating in it.

I do think we have to be open minded about the alternatives, and I don't think --

Mr. SMITH. Okay, and I am sorry, I have got to interrupt you to drill down on just one thing. I got that point, I may not get to General Allvin, but on your triad argument, I don't find that overwhelmingly persuasive, okay? If we have three legs we are better off, well why not four or five? Okay, yes, the more legs you have, theoretically the better off you are.

That doesn't necessarily answer the question of why this particular leg in this particular situation actually puts us in a better position to defend when it is stationary, and just a big, fat target. So, we have got to do better than just saying well, the more legs the better. Well, at a certain point, no. So, I have got to get a more specific answer, and I think General Allvin wants to dive in here.

Secretary KENDALL. I can give you that, the --

Mr. SMITH. Why is this leg helpful other than just being another leg?

Secretary KENDALL. The risk of a preemptive surprise attack that decapitates us or takes out our nuclear force becomes much higher if there is no ICBM leg. If the stealth of the submarines is broken, and the bombers are caught in their bases, you don't have anything left. I am an old cold warrior, I spent twenty years working on this problem. We have looked at tons of scenarios, we have looked at all sorts of different opportunities and possibilities.

The triad provides the most stable configuration, and it would be, I think a lot of risk, more risk than we should accept, to take down that nuclear leg --

Mr. SMITH. I am out of time, and I want to respect the chair, and General Allvin, you and I can talk about this offline. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson, is recognized.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And indeed, I was happy to meet with each of you as we came in, always I like to point out my appreciation of the Air Force, I grew up with that. My dad was in the Flying Tigers, the 14th Air Force, he served in India, he served in China, Kunming, Chengdu, Xi'An. I was really grateful to grow up in the shadow of Charleston Air Force Base.

So, any time I visit the Holy City, it is always uplifting to see the number of aircraft there, and around the world. Additionally, I am very grateful with Congressman Jim Clyburn, Congressman Ralph Norman, that I represent adjacent bases, the Joint Air Base McEntire at Eastover, South Carolina, and Shaw Air Force Base, of course in Sumter, South Carolina.

And so, your service to me is very, very important, and significant, and I see it firsthand. With that, I share the concerns of Chairman Mike Rogers, and that is, Secretary Kendall, the Legislative Proposal 480 effectively does an end run on the gubernatorial authority for consent over the transfer of their National Guard units. Your proposal disregards the governor's purview to make the best decisions for their state.

Setting precedent for federal overreach on Guard issues for years to come. As a 31 year Guard veteran myself, I know that you can count on the Guard, as it operates effectively today. With this, would your proposal allow the Department to relocate Guard assets without the approval of state governors? And if so, does this not waive the federal law requiring gubernatorial approval before any modification of Guard units and assets within their jurisdiction?

Secretary KENDALL. Thank you for your question. First of all, the Guard is enormously important to us. I have gotten to know the Guard, I was a reservist in the Army, I have gotten the Guard to know much better in this position, and I have come to really value

the contribution they make to National Security. Very professional, very capable force.

This issue of the very small number, it turns out to be between five and six hundred, of people out of over one hundred thousand people in the Guard that we need to integrate with the Space Force more fully, we created the Space Force as a very small organization designed to take on the role of a service, which is a very big thing to ask it to do.

And it needs to be as lean, and as tightly structured as possible so that it can do those functions. Just last year this committee supported the Space Force Personnel Management Act, which took the reservists who were space people, and is now in the process of moving them into the Space Force as part-time or full time Space Force people. That process is going very smoothly, we need to do the same thing for the very small number of people that are in the Guard that are in the same situation.

To give unity of command, if you will, to the Space Force, and to allow them to manage that small number of people, only about ten thousand total, as effectively as possible to do their very important mission. The reaction from the Guard, quite frankly, has been over the top on this. I mean, I read an article this morning by the head of the Guard Foundation, that this was an existential threat to the Guard.

We are talking five hundred plus people here, we are not talking an existential threat. No one is suggesting dismantling the Guard. This is a *sui generis*, a *de minimis* exception to our norm, and it is necessary to make the Space Force effective as it needs to be. I am sorry this has become such a politicized issue, it should be a very straight forward issue, quite frankly.

Mr. WILSON. Hey, we love the Space Force, in fact I want to give Chairman Mike Rogers credit that it exists. But precedence of moving Guard units without the governors being in approval is a real concern. And General Allvin, I am grateful to represent the Savannah River Site, where a significant amount of plutonium pits for our Nation's nuclear deterrents are produced.

And we know we need to upgrade these, and they haven't been upgraded for like sixty years, and so we have a two-site solution with Los Alamos, and we know that China is conducting the largest military buildup in peacetime history. What is the significance of any delay of our plutonium pit production?

General ALLVIN. Well, actually I will yield on the technical nature of that to the NSA (National Security Agency) and others. But I think any time we are looking at modernizing our nuclear force, any delays to that, I can't give you a specific, but it certainly would degrade our ability to modernize. I can't put the specifics on it, I have to yield to the NSA on that, but delays are bad.

Mr. WILSON. Well, indeed, hey, it is deterrents that we need, and that is exactly what each of you are providing, and with the leadership of Chairman Rogers, and our other colleagues, even the ranking member, we are working together on behalf of our country for you. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney, for five minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all the witnesses. Secretary Kendall, you have talked quite a bit publicly about sort of the challenge right now we have with early warning platforms, the E-3s are getting old, the economic business case for extending them is pretty weak. The E-7 is a really promising, more than promising replacement, Australia is already flying them, I think we are selling some already to the U.K.

Sort of where AUKUS is now in a situation where the other two countries are ahead of us. Is there something this committee can do to help accelerate, either through multi year authorities, or AP to sort of get the time line shorter so that we can start fielding these E-7s?

Secretary KENDALL. Where we are with E-7 is we are still in negotiations with the prime contractor to try to get to an affordable price we think is reasonable. We are getting closer, I am hopeful that we will get there soon. As a result of those negotiations going on longer than anticipated, we have taken one E-7 out of the budget, and slipped it a year.

That is one of the cuts in procurement this year, driven more by the fact that we couldn't get to an acceptable business deal. I think the odds are pretty good that we will get there, hopefully in the not too distant future. We have looked at ways to try to accelerate the program. I spent some time with the Program Office on that personally.

Because of -- I would have to go into a lot more detail than we have time for, but because of the way the program is structured, it is very hard to find ways to remove schedule from the program. It is an important program, it plays very well in our war gaming, and making contributions. It has a lot more capability than the AWACS does. The other thing that is happening in that world in general though is the shift towards more dependency on space.

We are also moving forward with moving target indicators primarily for surface targets, ground targets right now, but also at some point for airborne targets as well. What the threat is doing is reaching out to longer and longer ranges to engage, particularly our high value aircraft like an AWACS(Airborne Warning and Control System), or an E-7, or a JSTARS type of aircraft, and we have to respond to that.

And part of the response to that is to move some of that capability into space, and have a mix of capabilities to confront an adversary with.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, anything, the offer stands, in terms of if there is ways that we can help through the acquisition authorities, we are definitely on standby. Following the Air Force Special Operations Command V-22 Osprey crash off the coast of Japan in November of last year, we have had some pretty extensive briefings on the state of the investigation, and what the joint services have decided as a course of action.

I understand there may be a new set of inspection standards and processes to ensure safety precautions are taken into account prior to flight. I would just say I think it is really important that when the time comes, when the Air Force and the other services sort of

roll out the plan, I know they are back, sort of authorized to fly again, I just think it is really important.

And I think you understand this, just to have a strong public message about the fact that we are going to do things differently to make the confidence in this program, and I just wondered if you could comment on that?

Secretary KENDALL. General Allvin should comment also. But we are both in contact with General Bauernfeind, the commander of our Special Operations Forces, and he has a very thoughtful, thorough process in place, including public interface, as he works his way through getting the aircraft back in the air. They are cleared to fly again, but he is working through a process of ensuring that every one of those aircraft is individually ready to go, and doesn't have a problem.

And that is taking a bit of time. I think the other services are moving forward as well, maybe a little bit more quickly than we are. But the SOF(Special Operations Forces) aircraft, the Special Operations Forces aircraft fly in a more difficult environment than the Marine Corps, in many cases, or the Navy aircraft, so we are being a little more cautious even than the other services are. Do you want to add anything?

General ALLVIN. The secretary pretty much handled it, but to the point of the differences in mission, that is something that we shouldn't walk past. I mean, the difference between how the Marine Corps and the Navy operate their V-22 aircraft, and how AFSOC(Air Force Special Operations Forces) does, a lot of these more complex, it is not only more complex and perhaps challenging to the airframe, but also to the aircrew as well.

So, understanding that entire system, and ensuring that that is safe, and effective is General Bauernfeind's -- it is his number one remit, I think he is doing a fantastic job, but your point, Congressman, is exactly right. As we get that rolled out what we need to do is ensure that we rebuild that confidence, and have a defensible, clear message that says what we are going to do, and how we are going to do it.

And also be able to define the differences between the three different services to show that they are not inconsistent, even though they may not be on the exact time schedule.

Mr. COURTNEY. I mean, that is what the Navy did with McCain and Fitzgerald afterwards, and again, I think that you can see that really worked in terms of just there was a change in process, and I think again, there is a lot more confidence in how destroyers are being deployed. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank our witnesses for joining us today. Secretary Kendall, I would like to begin with you. The U.S. Air Force base budget, and then the EUCOM unfunded requirements list both call for additional counter-small-UAS(Unmanned Aircraft Systems) capability at U.S. Air Force installations. As I see things unfolding, we see counter-small-UAS and really, loitering munitions not having much distinction, they are becoming the same thing.

We saw recently a very disturbing trend at Langley Air Force Base, where because of a large number of UASs that were in that airspace, Langley had to close down just to make sure that we were able to defend the operations that were going on there. As I watch how missions are developing, you see the Army missile defense mission, you see the Air Force air base air defense mission, it looks like to me that there is a lot of commonalities there.

Can you give me an idea about how do you look at those different requirements, and who is responsible for what mission? Are there clear lines of distinction there? And do you think that based upon where we are today, are our Air Force bases adequately protected?

Secretary KENDALL. We have a wide range of threats to our air bases, they vary by theater quite a bit. Different in the Middle East, or in Europe, or in the Pacific. In the Pacific in particular, what China has been acquiring is a variety of missiles, precision missiles, ballistic, and cruise, and hypersonic designed to attack our air bases, and that is the threat that really drives us more than anything else right now.

In the Middle East, and to some extent in Europe we are faced with small UAVs more, we have to deal with all of these. The way the Department is approaching this is that the Army is generally the lead for research and development on small UAV problems, and we are participating in that, we contribute that, and are full-fledged members. And we are funding some improvements to our air bases for security to that.

I was just at several of our Middle East air bases where we have systems deployed today because of that threat. As you go up the chain a little bit in the threat, and start worrying about cruise and ballistic missiles, then systems like Patriot come into play. What we need, and there is a large study that has been going on for well over a year now led by the Army that we are participating in to try to come to an optimal solution for air base defense against a whole range of threats.

What we need in particular is a highly cost effective way to engage those cruise, and ballistic missiles, and those hypersonics. And there is some promising technologies in development which we think have potential do that. We will have to make some decisions in the department about force structure, and what our priorities are to acquire those, but I think it is an important part of air base resilience that we have to address.

Our whole concept of operation in the Pacific is called agile combat employment, which assumes that we don't stay on a single base to absorb missile attacks. We move around to different bases, and make it harder for the other guy. But you still need defenses, and you need defenses that can be where you are going to be to be effective. All our war gaming says that is a necessity. So, we are not where we need to be yet, but we are on the path hopefully to get there.

Mr. WITTMAN. Okay, great. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. General Saltzman, I wanted to get your perspective, because today what we are seeing is a massively increasing capability on the commercial side of space. That is a good thing, there is lots of constellations going up in different orbits, lots of different capabilities there, and that commercial capability, to me, seems to be a perfect oppor-

tunity to augment the capacity, and capability, and mass that we have on the military side of things.

In fact, I think that that actually has to be codified, because I think it is that important for the future of the United States Space Force and our space assets. Can you speak to the importance of the CASR (Commercial Augmentation Space Reserve Program) Program, the Commercial Augmentation Space Reserve Program, how you see it today, what you think the future is for that?

And what do you think needs to go into the structure of that to make sure we can capture the incredible things that are happening on the commercial side of space, and do that at the speed of relevance?

General SALTZMAN. Thank you, Congressman, I couldn't agree with you more, we definitely need to leverage what is available to us in the commercial industry for space. The CASR Program, I think is a classic example where we have used this in the Air Force prior to it, and the idea is about how rapidly can we expand and augment our capabilities in time of crisis or conflict.

And as you know, a lot of the pre-work, the planning, how will we integrate the contractual work that needs to be done with the companies to make sure that we are prime to execute at the speed of need is really what is at the heart of the CASR Program. Do the work ahead of time, account for it in planning, see what the requirements are, which of those requirements can be met by the commercial industry?

And then start talking about contract negotiations before we even actually sign a contract so that we are ready, and primed to put that excess capacity in place when we need.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Carbajal.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair. In addition to my district being home to some of the best wines in the world, it is also home to Vandenberg Space Force Base, the west coast range. There has been a rapid growth in the commercial space industry, especially with the increased launch cadence at both Space Force ranges. General Saltzman, and Secretary Kendall, does the increase in commercial launch cadence benefit our national security even when those rockets are not carrying DOD payloads?

Secretary KENDALL. I will start with a yes, and turn it over to General Saltzman to give you more details, Congressman.

General SALTZMAN. Absolutely, Congressman. You know that the more we use the infrastructure, the more we can off set and defray some of the costs associated with, especially on the commercial side. As we use the commercial launch facilities, they continue to develop the rocket technologies, the launch technologies. We enhance the experience and the competencies of all those that operate the range, do the spacecraft integration that is necessary for launch.

And in the end, the real benefit is the more you launch, the more we are driving the cost per pound to orbit down, and this is one of the most beneficial things that the commercial industry has done

for us in the launch enterprise, is drive that cost to orbit down so that we can start to explore different kinds of constellations in different orbits to do different kinds of missions.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. That question was important because in California I know there is permitting decision making that is going on right now, and the national security issue can't be further underscored, that is why I asked you that question, thank you so much. The increased gains will result in bottleneck unless additional payload processing is added to the range infrastructure.

General Saltzman, the fiscal year 2024 budget included eighty million dollars for a payload processing facility that is supposed to go to Vandenberg, can you provide an update on this project, including any time lines involved?

General SALTZMAN. I can get back to you on the specifics, but I haven't heard anything that says there is any delays, or that the money is not being spent, but I will get back to you specifically.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Great, thank you so much. I was really pleased to see the Space Force commercial space strategy was finally released. I think this is a great roadmap for better leveraging our nation's space industry. General Saltzman, how does the CSS work in coordination, or build on the commercial space office? And does fiscal year 2025 budget request help build out commercial integration capabilities as outlined in the CSS?

General SALTZMAN. Thank you again. In addition to the standard services that we have been buying for years, satellite communications are about one point two billion in the budget, launch services is about two point two billion. But we have added about four hundred million to bring some non-traditional kinds of data and services to bear.

The Commercial Space Office, Commercial Services Office, that is the one who is kind of the front door to collaborate with industry, and figure out what is the best military utility for these commercial services, and I think we are on a good path. The Commercial Space Office falls under SSC, so they have the lead to explore, that is what, when we say collaborative transparency in the commercial space strategy, that is what we are talking about.

Getting out with industry, figuring out what services are most beneficial to the government, and working closely with them to fill gaps, and expand our capacity.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Thank you. General Saltzman, one last question for you. With the proliferation of the commercial LEO(Law Enforcement Officer) constellations, it should be easier than ever to get to tactical surveillance, reconnaissance, and tracking data out to the combat commands and war fighters. I believe this service is -- the Space Force should be providing. How will CSS(Central Security Service) help get tac SRT(Special Reaction Team) into the hands of combat commands, and what challenges do you expect to run into while integrating this commercial capability?

General SALTZMAN. Again, I couldn't agree more with you. There is a lot of capacity, a lot of capability that is available to us in this SRT mission area. SSC(Space Systems Command) has a number of demos that are going on right now to explore exactly the best way to spend our dollars on those capabilities. And the Joint Commer-

cial Office is also exploring how best to incorporate space data into our overall architecture.

Again, with a focus on meeting those combatant commander requirements that sometimes can't be met through a normal intelligence process. Operational planning products that don't require the level of analytics that traditional intelligence products do. There is a lot of room for improvement there, and SSC is dedicated to getting that.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Great. Secretary Kendall, I look forward to you visiting Vandenberg Space Force Base in the near future with General Saltzman, look forward to hosting you, and showing you not only paradise, but the great capabilities at Vandenberg Space Force Base.

Secretary KENDALL. I think I will try the wine also, Congressman.

Mr. CARBAJAL. We will have some good wine for you as well.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Kendall, I know that the decision has been made on the A-10s, and as that I understand it, we are going to divest fifty-six aircraft this coming year. And my question is are we talking with other countries, whether they be NATO(North Atlantic Treaty Organization) partners or treaty countries that may be interested in that aircraft, to transfer it to them?

Secretary KENDALL. Yeah, I am not aware of any active interest. One country at least has expressed some interest, but the problem is once that aircraft goes out of the U.S. inventory there won't be any base of support for it. So, any country that picked it up and tried to sustain it would have a very hard time. It is also a very old aircraft, they are about forty-five years old, replacement parts are very hard to obtain.

Mr. SCOTT. They are, they are old, but they are effective. But I just, as we look to divest things, it seems to me like there is a whole lot going on around the world where I understand we are moving in a different direction, more technically advanced, but it would have sure been nice for Ukraine to have them two years ago.

Secretary KENDALL. Ukraine hasn't expressed much interest, I think they rightfully would be concerned about their survivability.

Mr. SCOTT. I agree. But I think if they had had them two years ago, it may have made a difference. I would just suggest that as we divest things, we are running a three trillion dollar deficit over the last three hundred and sixty-five days, we are now thirty-four trillion, as we divest things, I understand it is the right decision for the U.S.

But globally I think we need to be at least meeting with other people that share our interests, and our values. And while it might not be the right weapon system for us, it is certainly better than the systems that they had.

Mr. SCOTT. And we would be perfectly happy to have those conversations, we do transfer excess defense articles. We just transferred some C-130s, for example, to the Philippines, which they're very appreciative.

Mr. SCOTT. Sure. So, one of the other aircraft that has been divested is the JSTARS(Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System) from Robins Air Force, I think the last one left in November of 2023. General Allvin, the ABMS(μ Advanced Battle Management System) system is going to take its place, and then some. What are your goals for ABMS? Are you staying on track with the time line, what can we do to help with the Air Force mission, and the ABMS mission at Robins Air Force Base?

General ALLVIN. Well, thank you for that, Congressman. I would say that the advancement in the Advanced Battle Management System, and really across what we are referring to as the C3 battle management has really started to accelerate, largely due to something Secretary Kendall did a year and a half ago now, with the putting an integrator in across all those systems that is putting together the -- it is a complicated thing.

Mr. SCOTT. It is.

General ALLVIN. But when you put it together, having all of the architecture understanding what the pipes are, what the nodes are, how it all fits together, and for it to have the ability to work with the other services so it can truly integrate into the joint environment, that is where we have been making progress. We are now seeing some instantiations of that.

We are seeing, in the homeland defense area, some of the cloud based command and control is now moving to four or five different defense sectors. We are deploying, I believe we have now, as many as twenty this year, of these distributable battle management nodes. So, this idea of moving to a distributed architecture to do what we had done before is progressing along.

There will continue to be bumps along the road, but I feel very confident in General Cropsey and the team that he has mixing the technical folks with the operators, side by side, step by step, to ensure that we build this once, right the first time.

Mr. SCOTT. Just one suggestion. I am concerned that there is not enough dialogue across the different branches with ABMS, and the intent, and the use of it. I had the discussion with some people in the Army that would be dependent upon it, and they were not aware of the system, and that would just be my suggestion, that we need to be --

General ALLVIN. Yeah, Congressman, I couldn't agree more, and I would say that their convergence, and the Navy's overmatch, we are certainly partnering with them. We probably can't communicate on it enough. But I would say across services, and I would look over to my sister service over here in the Space Force, that is why we were building the DAF battle network, it is not just the U.S. Air Force --

Mr. SCOTT. I am talking about people that wear green more than blue.

General ALLVIN. Absolutely. And they are solving different problems, they are looking at different, solving a single kill chain, but they have to be integrated, Congressman, you are exactly right.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, people at the Ranger regiment were not very familiar with the program is my concern, and they are obviously -- all of the branches are going to be dependent on it.

So, with that I yield, I appreciate all of you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Ms. Houlahan.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, gentlemen, Secretary, and Generals for joining us today. Yesterday, I believe it was yesterday, we had a very similar hearing but with Army. And at the beginning our chairman and ranking member, and many of us, during the course of the hearing asked appropriate questions about the president's supplemental that has now been sort of on the back burner for the better part of six months, and the impact and implication of not having passed it yet.

And the impact and implication of when it does hopefully pass at some point to you all. I would ask the same question, because I am sort of surprised that -- I am one of the junior chipmunks here, that it hasn't come up yet. What are your thoughts about the president's supplemental, and its urgency? What is not happening because it hasn't happened, and what will happen if it does happen?

Secretary KENDALL. I can give you a quick response, but I think you have got two members of the joint chiefs of staff here, and I think you should hear from them. I watch this, obviously very closely, we are very heavily engaged in support to Ukraine in particular. They desperately need the help. And we look at the numbers, and the way they are exhausting air defense weapons, and artillery munitions, and so on, they need the help.

They war right now is not going in the right direction, and it is largely because they haven't gotten that assistance. So, the supplemental is needed there, it is also needed for Israel, and it is needed for Taiwan. It is a very important package, and it needs to be passed. I'm going to let my colleagues talk about their perspectives.

General ALLVIN. Well, we certainly, with the impact of being able to reimburse some of the munitions, and the things that we have supplied, we would look very closely as the request comes forward, different types of munitions to ensure that we don't deplete our own stockpiles. But in that, every time we do that, we incur a little bit more risk, but we understand this is part of integrated deterrence.

Integrated deterrence is being able to support our partners, and so we do not have to commit to, in the case of Ukraine, an Article V sort of situation. So, we, from a pure service perspective, we are very interested. If the supplemental were to be passed, we would be able to replenish some of those, or have maybe newer munition stocks with those. There are some monies that we are looking for with the presidential draw down authority that we are doing some sort of cash flowing.

And if we don't get that, then we are going to have to make some decisions at the end of the year with respect to readiness. I know the Army, probably yesterday, had more to say, they are doing quite a bit of cash flowing as well. And I have talked very closely to my counterpart, Randy George, and they also have issues with their risk towards the end of the year, and the operation and maintenance accounts if they don't get the supplemental passed.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

General SALTZMAN. They have covered the topic pretty well. I would just add that sometimes we get caught up in the tactical side of things, in munitions, and replenishment, but there is some strategic messaging here too, as well as withdrawing our support. So, I think we have to consider it all from tactical, all the way up through the strategical.

Ms. HOULAHAN. One hundred percent, and thank you, gentlemen, for that response. Transitioning into my fear, which is my fear is that if we don't do the right thing here, the implications for us and for our troops could be catastrophic. And speaking about our troops, and the quality of life of them, and the recruiting and retention of them, I am one of the people who participates, and in fact the ranking member of the Quality of Life Panel.

And we have just put out quite a big report on that and looking forward very enthusiastically to working with you on the various pillars that are provided therein, and suggestions listed there. Very briefly in the time I have left, there were five categories. Not surprisingly, service member pay, spouse employment, childcare, housing, and healthcare.

Very quickly, if you wouldn't mind mentioning kind of which one of those resonates most with you at this point in time, and how you are currently prioritizing the funding in that area?

Secretary KENDALL. The Department is looking at it, it just came out recently, I had a chance to look at it also. A couple of things we are doing reflected in our 2025 budget, the two hundred percent of poverty for basic needs allowance for example, we obviously support that. The one that I think we are going to look at very closely is the fifteen percent pay raise for junior enlisted.

We have given a fifteen percent pay raise over the last few years when you add the totals of the last few years. Yet when you look at how resources can be applied to influence quality of life for our people, we think there may be some more efficient ways to do that, to utilize those same funds. So, anyway, I know there will be a conversation between you and the Department as we look at this in more detail and get back to you. So, that is just preliminary reactions.

General ALLVIN. Also resonating with me is of course the housing issues as well. And I think we are making progress on that, I saw some of the recommendations, and I also have to fully digest to be able to advise the secretary. I think we are, I don't want to compare it to other services, I think we have leaned a little bit more further forward, I think there is a ways to go though, as well.

That is one that resonates with me. As we understand the fluctuation in housing, this is really a partnership. We cannot afford, nor do I think you want the military supplying housing for all of its members. And so, being able to have a closer communication with the communities to be able to adjust to those macro economic factors faster than we do now I think is going to be key. Because I think we have got to --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired --

Ms. HOULAHAN. I appreciate you, thank you so much.

I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. DesJarlais.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, Chairman. Secretary Kendall, the Department of the Air Force published the assessment of the Air Force Test Center in 2022 which found that three hundred million of facilities sustainment restoration modernization projects have not been funded. Can you describe the impact in operational risk associated with such an extensive back log?

And how would failure of our critical test infrastructure impact modernization efforts for everything from Sentinel, to hypersonics, to F-35 upgrades?

Secretary KENDALL. We are managing the risk associated with our installations at a level which we think is acceptable, but it's not great. I look at that as we look at our -- the foundational accounts that we fund, including facilities. We are funding, I think at one point six percent of replacement costs, we would like to be at two percent. What that leads to is slow deterioration, eventually you end up doing emergency repairs only in some of our installations.

Another very salient fact there is that we have about twenty percent excess capacity in our installations in terms of real estate holdings. So, we have the burden of having to carry that, and I know that there is no interest in a BRAC from this body, but we do need to take a look more fundamentally, frankly, at our installation posture, and try to address it as a whole.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. Last year in response to the issue outlined in the assessment of the Air Force Test Center, Congress increased FSRM by roughly thirty million above the president's budget request in order to start chopping away at that three hundred million dollar back log, and to ensure that the infrastructure was well positioned to support future endeavors. Would you support a similar increase this year?

Secretary KENDALL. I am in support of the president's budget. I think our request is within the FRA (Fleet Reservation Association), and we basically have given the Congress a balanced set of investments across the Department, taking everything into consideration.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. All right. General Saltzman, I would like to commend the Department for the work that you have all done to unleash private industry to further national security interest in the space domain. Watching the progress made over just the past decade has been incredible. However, not all the elements of the federal government appear to be on the same page when it comes to this issue.

I constantly hear from your industry partners that they are being burdened with a slow moving bureaucracy, be it through environmental studies with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), or launch re-entry licenses through the FAA. How are you working with other agencies to ensure that they are working as quickly as you all are to support the critical work that Space Force is supporting?

General SALTZMAN. We are intimately engaged with all of those agencies. The speed of licensing is something I hear routinely from industry. So, we reach out, every time we hear this we try to figure out exactly where the bottle neck is, or exactly where a policy can be shifted to try to streamline the licensing aspect of it. So, we are working closely with our interagency partners.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Staying on the topic of space, I wanted to get your thoughts on NSSL. The NSSL phase three is a long term strategy that will help shape the space industry over the next decade. At the same time, new buzzing around a potential ULA sale has created some uncertainty in the short term, and will certainly impact the Space Force's calculus. How does the Department view a potential sale or merger of a launch provider in awarding phase three bids?

General SALTZMAN. Well, the strategy itself is all about assured access to space, maximizing the number of providers to minimize the risk associated with losing assured access to space. I am very pleased with the phase three strategy, that it has on ramps and off ramps so that we can pull people in when they are ready to support the launch enterprise. And I think that having that flexibility in the strategy can account for any shifts in the market.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. And for Secretary Kendall and General Allvin, I wanted to give you both the opportunity to share an update from the ARRW test last month at Reagan Test Site, what did you all learn from this test?

Secretary KENDALL. The test was successful. We are evaluating what to do with ARRW, and what the future of our hypersonic portfolio will be overall, and we would have to go to a classified setting to talk about that, Congressman.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. So, we heard last year that the program is dead. Is it moving forward? What can we expect to see in the future?

Secretary KENDALL. We would have to talk about that in a classified session.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay, I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan, Ms. Slotkin.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you all, thank you for being here. Thank you for making the point, Secretary Kendall, in your remarks, or ahead of your remarks, about the importance of contested, contesting the air space, being prepared for the events we saw last weekend, and I couldn't agree more about our need to contest the space when it comes to the potential threat from China.

And as you know, now Chairman C.Q. Brown said in front of this committee that China could achieve air superiority over the United States and allied air forces as soon as 2035, so you are right to raise it. My questions, unsurprisingly to you, will connect back to my home state of Michigan. And just to review the bidding, we got word that the Air Force was going to remove the A-10s from Selfridge Air Force Base.

In January of this year we are very thankful that you publicly announced the decision to base twelve KC-46s at Selfridge Air Force Base, we appreciate that decision. But as you know, Michiganders who have worked on or near Selfridge are very focused on getting a fighter mission there. So, I just want to hear very clearly, as I think you have stated publicly before, that just because we got those refuellers doesn't mean we are precluded from any future basing of fighter aircraft, which you know Michiganders will be fighting hard for.

Secretary KENDALL. Your delegation is very consistent, I just testified with Senator Peters yesterday, he had the same question. You are not precluded from another fighter mission.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Great.

Secretary KENDALL. But the reason we put the KC-46 there was to off set the fact that we are taking out the A-10s, I don't want there to be confusion about that.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Right, and I don't think any Michigander is happy that we are replacing a fighter mission with a refueller mission, so we are looking for refuellers and a fighter mission, not refuellers instead of a fighter mission, but we will fight that battle another day.

Secretary KENDALL. Fully understand.

Ms. SLOTKIN. In relation to that issue, I co-led an amendment last year in the NDAA that requires the Air Force to submit a fighter recapitalization plan. That report was unfortunately due on March 30th, today is beyond March 30th. Can you help us understand when we will get that plan?

Secretary KENDALL. General Allvin and I have reviewed the final draft, it is very close to coming over, it should be over here as soon as we finish coordination on it.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Okay, that report is very important to a number of us, both in the house and the Senate, to understand your planning, and I think, per your comments, if we want to maintain a strong deterrent against China, we need to make sure we have fighters in the air that can do that, and fighters at the ready to do that. There will be a number of us who are working on a bill in this year's NDAA which will say before you can retire fighter aircraft you must show your math on your plan.

So, we are taking this to the next step, but your plan, and helping us understand the strategy would give us more confidence for some of us who are watching these things change. Separately on the issue of PFAS, the chemical that has contaminated a number of drinking water systems and ground water systems around our current and former bases in Michigan, since I have been here I have been hammering on this issue because we have got communities that literally can't drink the water.

And they have their location right next to a base. The Department of Defense, which I worked at for seven years, has fought us every step of the way, and now the EPA has officially changed the standards on PFAS(perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in drinking water. Some of the areas around our military bases, particularly Oscoda Military Base, cannot drink their water. Please tell us what you plan to do to now live up to the federal standards that you all claimed were the reason why you couldn't clean up these sites.

Secretary KENDALL. Well, we were all waiting for the standards. The standard has been announced, I think it is four parts per trillion, which is very stringent compared to what we had been using. The next step is to evaluate the impact that will be. We are going to prioritize communities where drinking water is most affected. So, we will be working with communities as we go forward with that.

I think we have something on the order of one hundred million dollars in the budget in 2025 to address this, but that is the tip of the iceberg. It is going to take a lot more than that to remediate the sites that were affected. So, we have already done assessments, we are going to see what this standard means now in terms of remediation requirements, and then we are going to move forward with this.

Ms. SLOTKIN. I appreciate that, some of these communities have been waiting upwards of ten or fifteen years. So, while it may be a new standard to us as of last week, it is not a new issue for people who literally have to buy their own water. And I would ask for a bit of an attitude change for the folks who are on the ground, who have been fighting us tooth and nail, and who now need to accept reality and help us clean.

Secretary KENDALL. Well, we can --

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here, I have enjoyed working with all three of you. I do have to point out though, that I did go to Air Commander Staff College, and National War College with General Allvin. He was always top of the class, he was a top athlete, and he never looked like he worked hard, so we just can't figure out how he does it. With that though, I do have a couple of documents and concerns.

The Department of the Air Force is requesting two hundred and sixty-two billion dollars, but what I would like the committee to understand, forty-five billion dollars of that is pass through spending, not going to the Air Force, going to totally unrelated agencies. That is about seventeen percent of the Air Force budget. And I think this clouds the vision of some of us, and others that look at budgets of just how much the Air Force is getting.

I think it exaggerates that appearance of how much money the Air Force has, and I sure wish we could correct that process. Secondly, I want to note that as per gross domestic product, we are spending the second lowest on defense in our history, going back to World War II. So, our spending levels are significantly lower than the norms going back to World War II.

And we see it in this year's budget. We are looking at a one percent increase, and you figure in inflation, it is about a two percent cut to what we need to be doing. And this is at a time we have got China, Russia acting the way it is in Ukraine. We have Iran just fired three hundred and thirty projectiles into Israel. So, I am concerned, I don't think we are going the right way.

So, my first question is to Secretary Kendall. At what point is our Air Force and Space Force too small to deter China?

Secretary KENDALL. To be direct about this, Congressman Bacon, my concern is more about quality than quantity. We are taking out some marginal force structure of our oldest aircraft, we are divesting some more this year. But getting to the quality we need to be competitive is really my first priority. We talked earlier about contested environments, and having adequate technological capability to succeed in a contested environment is really first for us.

We don't want our aircraft to be cannon fodder, we want them to be successful, we want our airmen to be successful. So, we are trying to move in that direction as quickly as we can. I think that General Allvin should talk about the size of the Air Force, I think that you deserve to hear his opinion on that, but that is where I am.

General ALLVIN. Thank you, Secretary, and thank you, Congressman. I think the secretary is exactly right. It is easy for us to fall into the numbers for numbers, and it is an easy way to do it, to count. But as you know, you have been in combat, you understand that the platform is only as good as the crew, and it is also only as good as the munition that it has on board, which has to be sophisticated enough to reach the target.

But also it has to have a sensor that can tell you where the target is, and those sensors need to be in a place where they can be resilient. We also have to have the path to get there, we also have to have the place where that aircraft can recover in a contested environment. All of those things go together, and I think it might be increasingly unuseful and unhelpful to start understanding the capability of the Air Force by just counting tails.

There is the phrase that says quantity has a quality all its own, it is only if it is effective and capable, otherwise that is just a larger quantity of aircraft that you are losing.

Mr. BACON. If I may interject though, last year we said we were seven fighter squadrons short of what we thought we need. I feel like with the budget, we are going to cut about ten more squadrons. So, I would say there is some numbers that we need. I mean, we don't need F-35s all over Iran or the Middle East to shoot down stuff over Jordan for example. I need to ask one more question, I am going to cut out a few, because I want to yield some time here to Sam Graves if I can.

But your combat command says they need twenty-two EA-37s for the Far East fight, and we only have ten. Are we going to have a plan to get to twenty-two? This is to General Allvin.

General ALLVIN. I think when we look at, again, it's the what is the risk of having less than twenty-two, versus having not enough of the ability to have the munitions. So, you can have all of the jamming that you want, but if you can't get the munitions through, so it sounds like a quibbling answer, but quite frankly I try and look at the entire system. So, the capability of ten, and also we look at the platforms that we are using for those EA-37s.

They are starting to be diminished in their reproducibility, and so you find yourself looking too far into the future to diminishing supply and those sort of things. But I think looking at it systematically trying to say if that eleventh, or twelfth, or thirteenth EA-37, is that more important than some other of the system that enables it to complete the kill chain?

Mr. BACON. I just went on, ACC(Air Combat Command) and PACOM(U.S. Pacific Command) said they need twenty-two for the kinds of cyber stuff they can do, but I will let it go at that. I know I didn't leave you much time, Mr. Graves, so I yield twenty seconds to you.

Mr. GRAVES. I don't think that's enough time.

Mr. BACON. Okay.

Mr. GRAVES. So, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last week the Supreme Allied Commander General Cavoli was here in front of this committee, and he gave, I think, testimony that was, I think, historic in nature. He was commenting on what was going on in Ukraine, and he said at this moment, moment, not weeks from now, but at this moment he could not overstate the gravity of what is facing our effort in Ukraine right now, and the effort of the Ukraine military.

He also said that in his three decades of study in the academies, and tactical studies, and his work in general, he found one thing that was extremely important. He said if one side has the ammunition, and the other side doesn't, the side with the ammunition wins. I think in modern day warfare, I think it is a fair statement, and I want to ask you.

I think you could say as the ground is now drying up in Ukraine, and the muddy season is over, and the offensive in the illegal war of Putin grinds forward on the ground, I think it's a fair statement to say the side that has air superiority always wins too, and the other doesn't. Can you comment on tactically how critical this moment is? And not anything -- this doesn't have to be classified to go down this road.

How critical is this moment where you are having that kind of ground war where they are ceding territory now that tens of thousands Ukrainians gave their lives for in the strategy on the ground, how important it is where the United States, which is uniquely situated by the way, the munitions and the air assets that are necessary are uniquely ours. Our allies don't have what is necessary at this moment.

So, can you tell us how critical this moment is? Not weeks, in terms of moving on the ninety-five billion dollar Senate security package, which passed the Senate by the way, with a seventy to twenty-nine bipartisan support. How critical is that to move on right now in terms of the fact that the air superiority imbalance is so great, and how does that affect things on the ground?

Secretary KENDALL. Congressman, I am not going to try to provide a stronger professional opinion than General Cavoli, he is intimately familiar with the situation. I am watching the intelligence, I think we all are, my colleagues are on the joint staff. But to your comment, a summary of what you said about weapons and air superiority, it is about resources, the side with the resources is going to win here, and Ukraine just doesn't have the resources.

And Russia has been applying them, there is a big imbalance there. And the price for us, of this, when you think about the fact that we have almost a nine hundred billion dollar defense budget to provide for deterrence, and that if we fail to deter Russia effectively here for a few billion dollars, what that means in terms of the consequence. All of that other investment is essentially wasted if we don't succeed in defeating aggression here.

That is what is on the table, and it is an urgent need from everything I have seen. I will stop with that, and let the chiefs make comment.

Mr. KEATING. Generals?

General ALLVIN. Again, I would also yield to General Cavoli. And also, I have been in touch with the USAFE Commander General Hecker as well, who is understanding sort of the air picture better than I can from D.C. and in Washington, but it certainly is the case. It is a different type of air battle now obviously, when you are talking about it is very heavily electromagnetic spectrum heavy area, and drones are involved.

But it is still, if you can have the advantage from the air, it is critical, and the secretary's point is the right one though. It is overall resources to be able to formulate a battle plan that is executable, especially in the springtime here when the fighting is going to pick up when it dries up. It is going to be key.

Mr. KEATING. Overall I think is a critical word that you use, because without this air superiority, frankly winning isn't going to be possible. General, do you want to comment on it?

General SALTZMAN. Yeah, we hear from General Cavoli routinely. I agree with his assessment, I agree with what you heard him say as well. We recognize that we are in a unique time frame. A land war of this size in Europe just has not happened for generations, and if we don't respond properly, it can only get worse. And I think we just have to recognize what it is we are standing here, what we choose to defend, and stand up, and support it.

Mr. KEATING. And while I appreciate what Speaker Johnson is trying to do moving forward, even if he is successful, that is going to be weeks, and weeks, and weeks before we get something on the president's desk if we do at all. We have act now, and it is urgent, and thank you for reinforcing that.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Banks.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Allvin, after falling short in 2023 for the first time since 1999 in your recruitment goals, the Air Force is on pace to reach those goals for 2024, what changed?

General ALLVIN. Well, thank you for that, Congressman. We really attacked this aggressively when we saw the down slide happening, and we looked at several things. We looked at our policies to ensure that they were still relevant. We looked at some things that maybe we were being overly restrictive of, so we did a clean sweep of that. A couple of things that were sort of easy as falling off a log.

If you can decrease the time it takes to have someone who wants to be naturalized become a citizen, that attracts people in. If you can understand the height and weight measurement that was required to even be considered, and you can relax to where it is consistent with the rest of the DOD standards, those are some simple things we did.

But some other things that we are doing to follow up on that is we are ensuring that we can have the recruiters do more of the pounding the shoe leather time, and not doing as much admin time. So, there were several things we did, a little bit more tar-

geted marketing, reaching out to other things. So, it was really attacking on all fronts.

And I think that, plus the fact that we are coming out of COVID, and people are starting to wake up again, and we are engaging. We put notes out to our wing commanders to get out to the community so people can actually see what their military can do for them. I think it was the compilation of all of those things that put us on the right path, and now we are making sure that we just don't rest on those laurels, and we are looking into the future to make sure we can sustain that.

Mr. BANKS. Would you say the Air Force has loosened its standards?

General ALLVIN. I would not say loosen its standards at all. As a matter of fact, I will give you the example that I talked about the body fat composition. People think the body fat composition is a different standard. We had a body fat composition restriction before we would even consider someone coming into basic training, even though we had advanced our basic training, better nutrition, better fitness.

When we put those standards back to DOD standards, we enabled another forty-five hundred recruits to be able to come in. We have done longitudinal studies on those, and of those, only one did not make it all the way through. So, we are making sure the standards and the quality sustain while we are actually opening the aperture to more Americans who can serve.

Mr. BANKS. Different story for the Air National Guard, still below our recruitment goals. What are we doing to fix it?

General ALLVIN. Well, the Air National Guard is also making gains, they had a little bit longer way to go. So, part of the issue with the Air National Guard is we have had pretty high retention rates in the United States Air Force in the active duty, and some of that affiliation is how they get their numbers up as well. But they have increased thirty-one percent over last year.

So, where last year they were well short, this year I think they are going to be, they are targeting to be within five percent of the goal. The Air Force Reserves is going to be either within one percent, or they are going to make the goal as well. So, across the board we are actually making progress.

Mr. BANKS. Can you quantify how far off we are with Air National Guard?

General ALLVIN. The Air National Guard right now is on a path to be within five percent, I have got to get the exact, what that raw number turns out to be, but they are within five percent of their goal.

Mr. BANKS. Secretary Kendall, do you have any advice on what we can do to fix that, the Air National Guard recruitment numbers?

Secretary KENDALL. No, we have been working this very hard ever since we started realizing we were going to be below our target year before last. I have got to give General Allvin a lot of credit, he ran a task force as the vice chief of staff of the Air Force, it addressed an awful lot of these issues. We also just put more resources at it. We have increased, in our 2025 request, we are increasing the amount of money for the Guard for recruiting.

A lot of what we are seeing is just lack of familiarity with the military, people don't have the same exposure they once did. So, we are trying to reach out, and get into communities much more. Make people understand what we offer, I think there is some misperceptions about that that we are trying to fight against. I have never been terribly concerned about this, because I have always felt that we had management tools at our disposal to address the problem.

And if we just put more resources on it, and were thoughtful, we were going to work our way out of it, and that is exactly what has been happening. So, I am reasonably comfortable, and I am very happy with the progress we have made actually, particularly with the active in the Reserve, and the Guard is not very far behind. I think we are going to be okay on this.

Mr. BANKS. Secretary, has the Air Force ever intentionally prevented itself from recruiting from children of military families, or service members, veterans, has that ever been an intentional part of force recruitment?

Secretary KENDALL. Not that I know of, I mean a lot of our people come in because they have experienced the military through their family life. So, I think we get a fairly significant proportion of people that come from that background, we encourage that.

Mr. BANKS. Yeah, you would agree, General?

General ALLVIN. Absolutely.

Mr. BANKS. The biggest source of military recruitment are the children of military families.

General ALLVIN. Absolutely, that's right, Congressman.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I go to the next member, I want to pause and recognize the presence of one of our former colleagues, former chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, and my friend, Jim Cooper of Tennessee. Welcome back, my friend, good to have you.

Mr. Kim, you are now recognized.

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, thank you all for coming on out. As I was reading through your joint testimony, you all emphasized, and pointed out just the development of hypersonic missile capabilities by both China, as well as Russia. I guess I just want to ask you are we prioritizing enough hypersonic defense capabilities, and the development of those?

I mean, when we are seeing that rise, I know we are investing in our own capabilities when it comes to hypersonic, but what about the defense side of things? I am trying to get a better understanding of where we are scaled to given this very concerning rising threat.

Secretary KENDALL. Defense against hypersonic is important to us, because there are a lot of hypersonic weapons potentially targeting our air bases in particular. The responsibility for that largely falls on the Missile Defense Agency, and on the Army. What we are doing to contribute to that in particular is our space based missile warning system that we are deploying, which will support an overall architecture of hypersonic defense.

Particularly against some of the intermediate and longer range threats. And General Saltzman can address what we are doing

there, but that is moving forward pretty quickly. I understand the Army recently has -- our NDA has recently awarded a contract, or is about to, for an interceptor that will be more capable against some of these contracts. So, that is a work that I don't think is moving quite as fast as we would like to see it in an ideal world.

General SALTZMAN. Yes, sir, about three billion dollars in fiscal year 2025 devoted to what we are calling the proliferated war fighter space architecture. And it is not just that we are putting more sensors up. Those sensors are more capable, and actually give us some tracking capabilities. And so, the precursor to missile defense is missile warning, and that is what we are putting in place.

General ALLVIN. Yeah. I would also add that over the past several months there has been an ongoing, steady analysis of alternatives that should come out in June on air and cruise missile defense of the homeland. That has been Department of Air Force led, that study, and has really broken it down into three areas that you really need for air and cruise missile defense.

You need the sensors, and then you need the effectors to degrade them, kill them, whatever, and then you need the command and control structure. So, we have been able to look at each of those elements, that is going through an analysis of alternatives to determine the exact architecture to be able to put those together. And as General Saltzman said, the missile warning, missile tracking is a key part of that sensor.

But that analysis of alternatives should be done in the next couple of months on the architecture, and then we will look at building out the pieces to that to have a better defense against cruise missiles, hypersonics and others.

Mr. KIM. Yeah, thank you for that. I would love to be able to keep in touch with you all about this, and I know that there is limitations of what we can talk about in this kind of setting, but in other opportunities I would like to have a better sense, especially when it comes to the maneuverability that really sets this apart from other types of challenges.

So, I understand the warning and the tracking, but how do we think through the tracking, as well as the interceptors when we are talking about something with that kind of velocity, but also that kind of maneuverability, and I would like to have that sense. I wanted to just switch gears to another type of threat. Obviously we have talked a lot about cybersecurity in the past, and the challenges on that front.

The joint base in my district, McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, is home to the 140th Cyber Operations Squadron. Those cyber operators are performing this kind of critical work for the defense of our country every single week. And I guess I am just trying to get a sense from you, how do we better support our cyber operators in the Air National Guard, and the force overall?

So that we can try to make sure that this is rising to the level that we need to. I'm trying to have a better sense of how are these pieces fitting together in your minds?

Secretary KENDALL. Our cyber capabilities are really critical to our operational success overall, and frankly whether we will even be able to get into the fight because of the potential for cyber attacks. One of the things we have done under the re-optimizing for

great power competition set of initiatives, is we are elevating the 16th Air Force, which was under Air Combat Command, to be a direct reporting command.

It will be the AF(Air Force)-Cyber if you will, the Air Force component of Cyber Command. But it will also have responsibilities for the Air Force as a whole. So, we are trying to strengthen our capability there. We are also creating warrant officers in that field, and we are creating new units, we are putting new units together that are dedicated to that function.

My expectation is that we will expand that in the future, we are moving that direction now, but I think it is going to grow even more. I just saw a Defense Science Board report on the cyber threats that we face to our infrastructure, and I think we have to do things to address that as well, so it is a very high priority. And I think the Guard is ideally positioned to play an important role in that.

We will be able to tap into people who are doing similar functions basically in the civil world, and then have them available to bring into the military in a crisis, I think that is going to be very valuable to us, it is a great way to get that expertise.

Mr. KIM. Okay, great, thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Gaetz.

Mr. GAETZ. The F-35 is our signature Air Force platform. What percentage of them are fully mission capable today? Mr. Secretary?

Secretary KENDALL. Congressman, if you give me a second, I am going to pull up my card and give you an exact answer.

Mr. GAETZ. Okay, happy to.

Secretary KENDALL. Fifty-five percent is the number we have for operational availability.

Mr. GAETZ. Full operationally capable, fifty-five percent?

Secretary KENDALL. Fifty-five percent for operational availability.

Mr. GAETZ. Do you think that is a good number, or a bad number?

Secretary KENDALL. I think that is not a good number.

Mr. GAETZ. Failing?

Secretary KENDALL. I wouldn't put it quite in that category, I would ask General Allvin to comment on that. It is a number we would like to see something --

Mr. GAETZ. Yeah, well the reason I ask is because we got testimony that is a little contrary to that. Lieutenant General Schmidt, head of the F-35 program gave testimony to the TAL subcommittee at HASC, and that testimony was that as of February of 2023, a little over a year ago, only twenty-nine percent were fully mission capability.

General ALLVIN. I think we need to talk difference between operational availability and mission capable, Congressman.

Mr. GAETZ. Okay, so how many are fully mission capable today?

General ALLVIN. I do not have that number, but I would not dispute what the JPO has in front now. I would look --

Mr. GAETZ. So, twenty-nine percent, so fully mission capable, twenty-nine percent, you have no basis to dispute that, but you don't really know if it is true or false?

General ALLVIN. I have no basis to dispute it, but I would like to --

Mr. GAETZ. So, you would agree that fifty-five percent is like a D, the twenty-nine percent is definitely failing, right?

General ALLVIN. For fully mission capable, but the missions that they can accomplish --

Mr. GAETZ. Yes, so I mean, I go meet with the folks at the 33rd at Eglin Air Force Base in the district I represent, and they are doing a lot, there is a lot of mission there, but even the guys who are also at Eglin doing tests, they end up being at the very end, right? And I totally get why you want your operational squadrons to be the most capable. But then test gets put to the end, and then we are not meeting our needs.

I just think anyone watching this, one, would be surprised that you, General, don't know the exact percentage that are operationally capable. And two, I think people would be surprised that it is twenty-nine percent. And this GAO report that I found on breakingdefense.com, that I seek unanimous consent to enter into the record, it says that the reason we are not capable is because you guys at the Pentagon have given too much power to Lockheed Martin and its subcontractors for sustainment.

Mr. GAETZ. Do you believe Lockheed Martin has been given too much power on the sustainment of the F-35?

General ALLVIN. I believe that Lockheed Martin has more power than in some other weapon systems. They do have the contracted logistics system, that was part of the procurement plan that was put in place twenty some years ago.

Mr. GAETZ. Well, I mean, but it is not working. If the Lockheed Martin built the F-35, we only can -- only twenty-nine percent of them are fully operationally capable right now, we have all agreed that is failing. So, now the question is why is it failing? And this GAO report says the reason it is failing is because the fox is watching the hen house.

Because the very contractor bilking the taxpayer for this platform is now in a position where they can't sustain it. Do you have a basis to disagree with that conclusion?

Secretary KENDALL. I have a long history with the F-35, and I inherited the program, I came into it in 2010, it was a few years into production at that point. And the first time I saw the program laid out, the schedule for it, and so on, and when the decision points were going to be, the question I asked, and I am going to quote myself, "who is running this program, the government or Lockheed Martin?" That is a quote from 2010. And --

Mr. GAETZ. I think you have your answer, Mr. Secretary, Lockheed Martin.

Secretary KENDALL. And we stood up the program when it was originally setup under a philosophy of management called total system performance. Which essentially gave to the prime contractor complete control of the program. We did not acquire the intellectual property to allow the government to come in, and step in, and control the program.

Mr. GAETZ. It sounds like we have --

Secretary KENDALL. We are still fighting that problem today.

Mr. GAETZ. Well, right, but that is such important testimony for us to hear. Every member of the committee heard that. The government isn't running this program, Lockheed Martin is running this program.

Secretary KENDALL. That was a question I asked back then.

Mr. GAETZ. Well, it sounds like you got the answer. What is the answer to the question, Mr. Secretary? Because only twenty-nine percent of them are operationally capable.

Secretary KENDALL. We took a lot of steps to try to get that under control. I once imposed a production contract on Lockheed. I dictated a price then, because we couldn't get a negotiation done, I did a unilateral contract, let them take me to court if they wanted to, they chose not to. Put in place program managers who were very firm with the contractor, and insisted on performance.

We have had some conversations with the current head of the JPO, and we have had conversations with the CEO of Lockheed. We --

Mr. GAETZ. I appreciate those conversations, I have always found you to be a truth teller, you are always very honest with the committee, and straight forward. The problem is the tail here is wagging the dog, and it is not going to get better unless there is accountability for the fact that their planes don't fly.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First and foremost, I would like to thank our airmen who have served us well in the 335th Fighter Squadron, you kick butt defending our ally Israel over the past weekend, and I am extremely proud of that. Thank you to our witnesses who are here today. Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you. In this fiscal year's budget, there is a plan for the Air Force to eliminate one fire squadron from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

We have been talking about this well over a year now, with many mixed messages along the way. There was a report requirement regarding the force structure rationale due to the Congress, due to the committee on April first, which we did not receive. We then moved forward to inquire about the report again, and I was anticipating, hoping to get the report by this meeting today, which we did not receive. What is causing the delay?

Secretary KENDALL. The report is in final review and coordination. General Allvin and I have both looked at a final draft, and we should have it to you very shortly.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Secretary, if it is in final draft, we are hitting print on the page here, the computer, whatever we are doing, can you share with us, since it is on the way, what criteria is being used to determine taking away a squadron at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base?

Secretary KENDALL. It is a longer conversation about the mix of the fighter force, the cost effectiveness of every element, the set of capabilities we have to have, and the cost of any modernization that would be required to keep the aircraft current. And then of course total resources available to the Department. So, we have for some time known we have taken out --

Mr. DAVIS. Well, Mr. Secretary, I look forward to seeing this report soon, really soon. And yes or no, do you believe when there is a required report, and you are submitting a budget, that the report maybe could help inform us?

Secretary KENDALL. I do agree with that, you will have the report very shortly.

Mr. DAVIS. A loss of five hundred and twenty jobs at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base would have a tremendous impact on our community in Eastern North Carolina. Most of the counties in our state are ranked tier one counties, which are the most economically distressed. Congress has told the Air Force to modernize, I get it.

If we can still uphold our national security interests in divestment decisions, then should we consider, I'm just asking, should we consider the impact of the decisions on the local communities?

Secretary KENDALL. We do consider that impact when we make these decisions.

Mr. DAVIS. How was that considered in this process?

Secretary KENDALL. Well, we try overall to minimize those impacts. Unfortunately, sometimes they are unavoidable.

Mr. DAVIS. Can you tell me the median income in Wayne County of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base?

Secretary KENDALL. I cannot, Congressman.

Mr. DAVIS. You don't know? Do you realize this is one of the most impoverished counties in the state, in Eastern North Carolina. In a region, our congressional district, we are four twenty-one median income. I look forward to seeing that report. Are there alternatives when we look at what you are rolling out here, to bring other missions to Seymour Johnson to replace the jobs that will be lost, to take care of the impact of this community?

Secretary KENDALL. At this time I am not aware of an alternative. We have looked for that, we try to do that whenever we can --

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Secretary, do you care about this community?

Secretary KENDALL. Of course I do, Congressman.

Mr. DAVIS. Can you tell me then the plan that is in place to consider the impact for any alternatives that you can bring to this community?

Secretary KENDALL. When we do these decisions, we look at a range of alternatives, and we try to do everything we can to protect the interests of the community.

Mr. DAVIS. But I am asking clearly to you right now, what is the plan for just considering to roll out looking at alternatives for this community?

Secretary KENDALL. Whenever there is an adjustment like this, we try to work with the community to make it as painless as possible. But yeah, I understand you --

Mr. DAVIS. What efforts are taking place in this community right now? This is the first I have heard there was any effort to reach out to the community. Can you tell me specifically?

Secretary KENDALL. I would have to get you that for the record.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Secretary, I can tell you this. I love the Air Force, I served in the Air Force. I take great pride in my service in the Air Force, and I believe you know that. But I also believe that if we can maintain our national security interests, we really have to

look hard at the decisions that are being made, and I am not satisfied today with your answers.

I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. STRONG. [Presiding.] The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Waltz, is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Secretary, I was struck by a statement you just made, and I just want to touch on Representative Gaetz' concern about readiness. I am the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee. I mean, I understand there is a quality over quantity argument. But the basic issue is if they can't fly, that is a -- I mean that is a strategic failing on our part.

And I think the Pentagon has become so focused on, I know it is a balance, I know there is a pendulum swing, but on making these kind of hand made bespoke high tech Ferraris when sometimes you need a fleet of pickup trucks. And you certainly need, whether they are Ferraris or pickup trucks, that can operate in the desert, and can operate out in the corrosive environment in the Pacific.

So, let's talk about some of your pickup trucks. The Air Force owns and operates DOD's largest fleet of commercial derivative aircraft, they use commercial parts. This, Mr. Secretary, is a bag of bushings. This bag of bushings stamped out by machinists don't need a high school diploma, not anything high tech about this. All of this bag is compliant with the FAA specifications. How much do you think the Air Force pays for this bag of bushings?

Secretary KENDALL. I don't know, Congressman.

Mr. WALTZ. Ninety thousand dollars. This is a ninety thousand dollar bag of bushings that you need for any jet turbine engine, just to operate. So, the exorbitant cost due to DOD only buying commercial parts from the OEMs, which are essentially sole source, is literally driving us out of business. I mean, the interest on our debt alone is now exceeding for the first time in American history the entire defense budget.

We can't afford it anymore. So, with FAA(Federal Aviation Administration) compliant parts, I mean you cut the cost in half or even more. So, my question is why can't -- these are commercial birds out there, by the way, it has all kinds of implications for contested logistics when you can access commercial parts in the middle of a war, potentially in the Pacific. Why can't we use FAA compliant? I mean it's the safety standard leader in the world. Why can't we do that?

Secretary KENDALL. I don't know a reason why we couldn't. I am familiar with some of the issues you are trying to raise here from my previous position. Where --

Mr. WALTZ. Yeah, I know you are, that is why I am asking you.

Secretary KENDALL. Yeah, Defense Logistics Agency used to report to me, that is where we do a lot of our parts acquisition. And we had an issue when I was there with people gouging us basically, charging us too much for parts. And we ended up, I think in court over it.

Mr. WALTZ. What can we, just in the interest of time, Mr. Secretary, come back to us, how can this committee help you fix that? We literally can't afford the modernization, the recruiting, the pac-

ing, everything we need if we are paying ninety thousand dollars for a bag of bushings.

Secretary KENDALL. I work with Dr. LaPlante on this, because it is a systemic issue, and again, most of the parts buying is done through DLA.

Mr. WALTZ. But you have the largest fleet of commercial birds, right? You have got the Ferraris, but these are the pickup trucks, and we should just be able to buy them.

Secretary KENDALL. What we have to be able to do is challenge the prices. And we have to have knowledgeable buyers who can understand when they are getting a ridiculous price, and go in, and ensure that they get paid at that --

Mr. WALTZ. Let's work together on that, I just need in the interest of time, I just want to move again to the recruiting, and the Genesis Program. I have here a quote that was given during the Air and Space Forces Association Air Warfare Symposium that basically says if you do the math, you are somewhere in the ball park of fifty-six hundred folks that we could have likely brought on if they weren't waiting on a medical approval.

And now you have a program that digs into medical records, and so a kid who took ADHD meds because maybe his parents got divorced when he was fourteen or fifteen now can't get approved, somebody who wants to serve, I think we are trying to solve one problem, and then we have created a whole disproportionate others. And I want to work with you on that to -- let's fix the Genesis System, and how it is affecting you.

And then just my question remaining, you are the only service that in your proposal, proposed a cut in junior ROTC(Reserve Officers' Training Corps) in high schools. Do you think that junior ROTC in high school is getting to this Gen Z, getting to them early about service, leadership, discipline, followership is helpful?

Secretary KENDALL. Junior ROTC is a valuable program, I am not aware that we made a cut. We may have for some reason, I would have to go back, and get back to you on that.

Mr. WALTZ. I look forward to working with you on that as well. You get a better citizen, and you get a recruit. Thank you.

Mr. STRONG. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentlewoman from Hawaii, Ms. Tokuda, is recognized for five minutes.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Last summer I had the privilege of traveling to Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, Guam, and the Philippines with the chairman, and ranking member, and many of my colleagues on this committee. And of course we made our traditional stop in Hawaii. During that stop however, I was surprised by a briefing on the unacceptable state of the Hickam Ramp.

And the continued challenges the Hickam side of Joint Base Pearl Harbor experiences as part of their joint basing relationship with the Navy. From what I understand, the Hickam Ramp is in an unacceptable state that reflects years of budgetary neglect, and the cost of getting it back to operational readiness is jaw droppingly high. I know that the Air Force and the Navy have had many conversations about the right path forward since last summer.

We got an update from your team about the latest developments, and it seems like there is a lot still to be determined, and we are just shy of one year since this issue was first raised to this committee's attention when we were on site. I am concerned, however, given the focus on quickly re-optimizing for great power competition that the necessary maintenance and improvement to the Hickam Ramp does not appear to be in the fiscal year 2025 budget request, or in the unfunded priorities list.

Mr. Secretary, am I looking at this right? If this is a priority, where is it? And if so, would you please explain to me how the Air Force is working to address these issues with the Hickam Ramp, and who is going to pay to fix this problem?

Secretary KENDALL. Thanks for your question. General Allvin and I were just there, and got a chance to look at the condition of the ramp personally. The team there has laid out a good plan to move forward, and we have had a lot of discussions with the Navy. The Navy has funded an upgrade to the ramp, my understanding is that there is three hundred and seventy-nine million dollars in the period starting in 2025 through 2030 to fix the ramp and connecting taxiways.

So, that is budgeted and programmed as I understand it now, and I will just verify that to make sure that it is correct.

General ALLVIN. Yeah, that is what I understand with the Navy doing that, but also to the secretary's point, we talked to sort of the Air Field Authority, Colonel Bianco there gave us a fairly in depth briefing about what needs to be done. And now, so we are following up on that trip to be able to ensure that we continue to work from the Honorable Chaudhary of our installations and environment.

It says in this section the Air Force has been really driving this hard with its Navy counterpart. But now, understanding if there are other memorandums of agreement to where we can have different authorities to make sure we can help control the pace of how that ramp gets fixed, we are going to do that.

Ms. TOKUDA. So, when can we anticipate operational readiness based on your conversations with the Navy, just given our proximity to the Indo-Pacific, our strategic role that we play? It is very concerning, I think it was concerning for the leadership of this committee to see the condition of the ramp. So, when do we expect operational readiness to be in place?

General ALLVIN. Well, again, this is military construction, so the military construction has to have the planning and design, get to thirty-five percent planning and design. It needs to get to thirty-five percent planning and design before I could even consider putting it on my unfunded priorities list.

So, it is going through that process now with the Navy, and we are going to look at how fast to move it based on maybe the sequencing and the phasing of the design, and the MILCON, but that is us working with the Department of the Navy.

Ms. TOKUDA. Well, my humble suggestion is to pick up the pace in terms of the urgency. Because if we truly want to be ready in the Indo-Pacific, you cannot have conditions like this existing, so thank you for that, and we will continue to be in conversation with you and the Navy about this. I think the issues with Hickam are

illustrative of a broader, quite frankly, set of infrastructure sustainment challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

And the reality of distributed operations requires relying often on infrastructure in less than ideal conditions, all in a non-permissive, contested environment. So, Mr. Secretary, how is the Air Force managing and adapting to the risk inherent in infrastructure sustainment challenges in the Indo-Pacific?

Secretary KENDALL. General Allvin and I got to see a lot of that firsthand. We visited Tinian, which is one of our hubs, our spokes rather, our more remote bases that we are in the process of clearing and re-paving so that we can use that strip. Under the Operational Imperative Initiative from two years ago, which the committee supported, and we funded starting largely in 2024, we do have a lot of money allocated to this purpose.

Upgrading our facilities in the region so that they can support the operational concept we have, agile combat employment. So, we are moving forward. We are not moving as fast as I would like to, I think as you would either. We are moving forward on that set of initiatives designed to address those problems, we are well aware of them.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, and I know I am just about to run out of time, so I will put this in as a question. But I would like for you to expound a bit. In your posture statement you talked about challenges imposed by the Fiscal Responsibility Act, especially in the procurement, and research and development, and I would like for you to just talk a bit more, and elaborate on how those budgetary constraints also impact investments in infrastructure sustainment, and submit that for the --

The CHAIRMAN. [Presiding.] The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Dr. Jackson.

Dr. JACKSON OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for our witnesses, for being here today, I appreciate your time. Gentlemen, the Air Force faces the difficult task of extending aircraft like the B-52 and the T-38 that first flew in the 1950s, while simultaneously developing new state of the art aircraft like the B-21 and the T-7.

These new platforms take time to develop, but our Air Force needs to get these new aircraft into the hands of our airmen sooner rather than later. General Allvin, last year I asked General Brown about the T-7 Red Hawk Program, and how we can get past the delays which have plagued this trainer. He said he was focused on the Air Force training pipeline because he needs airmen to be ready to train and fight.

And that he had gathered the applicable groups in the same room to align their focuses and work on the issues of the T-7. Yet here we are again talking about T-7 delays due to parts quality and supply chain issues, sliding the delivery further to the right, and backing up more and more airmen in the pipeline, and creating an even greater pilot shortage.

As you know, the T-7 will replace the aging T-38 fleet at Sheppard Air Force Base as part of the Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training Program, which is of course based in my district. This

problem isn't only going to affect the U.S. airmen is my point here. Our NATO allies that participate in pilot training in Wichita Falls are very concerned about the impacts on their militaries as well.

We have a responsibility to get this right, and it seems like this issue isn't getting the attention it needs from the Air Force in my opinion. The original initial operational capability for the T-7 was supposed to be this year, 2024. But now the Air Force is looking at the second quarter of fiscal year 2028. General Allvin, I am going to ask you the same question I asked General Brown last year.

What is the Air Force doing to overcome these delays, and help our industry partners get the T-7 to bases like Sheppard Air Force Base more quickly, and how are we ensuring that we end this never ending cycle of bad news on our new platforms like the T-7 trainer aircraft. Can you commit to me here that we will get these jets to Sheppard Air Force Base as quickly as we possibly can?

General ALLVIN. Congressman, I will start with the end one, yes, as soon as we possibly can. We continue to work with Boeing, and the T-7, it is now in flight test. So, we continue to move on, and as a former test pilot, I would hesitate to say that that guarantees things are going to go as smoothly, sometimes you do find things in flight tests that you hadn't before.

There is a bit of the way that it was developed too, with the digital engineering being a bit new that might cause new issues. It may allow us to go through testing more rapidly. But what General Brown said, he held to. We did put the right people in place, we are having a laser focus on it, trying to get past issues one at a time with the T-7 to ensure that we can bring that on as soon as possible.

Now, in the meantime, we also understand as you said, Congressman, we need to ensure that the T-38 can remain viable through them. And so, as part of my unfunded priority list, I had what the teams do, is I have our team go through a couple of sprints to look at what are the things that move the needle the most with respect to supplies to keep those J-85 engines, to keep that refurbishment happening, so we can keep that, which is a long pole in the tent for the T-38.

So, we are trying to tackle it on both ends, to be able to work with Boeing to accelerate, and to do whatever we can to keep that T-38 flying so we can keep that pipeline of airmen, American, and allied, and partner nations as well.

Dr. JACKSON OF TEXAS. Well, I am committed to working with you on that. I think that we are headed for conflict somewhere in the world pretty soon, and we need to be ready to go, and we are not. The Air Force was the first service to start with the Nacelle Improvement Program on its fleet of CB-22s, and it serves as a prime example of how targeted investment can yield exceptional results.

From the data that has been provided to my office, the Nacelle improvement program has saved ten thousand maintenance man hours to date, and has improved the ratio of man hours to flight hours by two hundred percent. The Air Force's decision to invest in this program, and ensure we have the most capable inventory

of air frames on the flight line for our service members is a model I believe the other services should follow, and move expeditiously to adopt.

While improving the quality of aircraft for the service member, it is also saving crucial resources at a time when budgets are going to be heavily constrained. General Allvin, while I realize that our time here is limited, I would like to ask you if we could find the time for you to come by my office at some point in the future and discuss with me in detail what your plans are for the fleet of B-22 aircraft in the Air Force.

And for the next generation of tilt rotor aircraft, we are manufacturing the B-280s as you know, in my district, the helicopter in the Army's program, which I have been a big proponent of, and I would like to see the other services follow that as well. However, with the time we have here today, General Allvin, how do you envision the role of the CB-22 when we think about the Indo-Pacific theater, and what operational capabilities does it provide to our Air Force that are difficult to replace?

General ALLVIN. Well, Congressman, I will tell you that in the aftermath of the accident, and now getting those back to flying again, General Bauernfeind is doing a comprehensive review. And as part of that, we are looking into all those things. From getting them back to flying, which is most important, safely, and back operating to look into the future of the CB-22.

So, Congressman, I definitely take you up on your offer to be able to talk about that, and the future of how we anticipate going forward with the CB-22 at the conclusion of that comprehensive review, which should be in the next two months.

Dr. JACKSON OF TEXAS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time is expired.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Vesey.

Mr. VEASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask General Saltzman and General Allvin, have you all ever heard of the term pseudofolliculitis? Okay, you have heard of the term pseudofolliculitis. I wanted to ask you, because a lot of people don't know about this, but this is a skin condition that for people that have ingrown hairs, mainly in Black men, and so when they shave it can cause pain and discoloration.

You can see discoloration under my neck right now. I love a good shave, but you can see there is discoloration that is under my neck right now. And I wanted to just ask you what are the current policies regarding shaving waivers in the Air Force and the Space Force, and what sort of accommodations are you looking at? And I want to be one hundred percent clear, I have a high school senior, I tried to get him to join the Corps of Cadets at A&M, he wasn't interested.

And so, I believe in military service, and understand the uniformity that you are trying to get everybody to be the same, and you shave their hair, so I am not trying to change that. I respect that, and understand why that needs to be in place. But this is obviously a very serious issue, and has affected men's careers. I have a pastor in my district that I am trying to help.

We are doing case work for him right now trying to help him because of his discharge status because of this issue that he had with

shaving. And so, just wanted to get a better understanding of how these waivers work.

General ALLVIN. Well, Congressman, we do have. And, more recently, we've sort of raised the awareness of the waiver process.

And so, that if you have that condition and you go to see the medical professionals there at the medical treatment facilities, they provide you, they grant you the verification that that's a medication condition. And, you're granted the waiver.

And, I believe, the number of shaving waivers for this particular condition, I'd like to get you the exact numbers, but it's gone up by a degree of, I would say, almost 50 percent increase in the past several years, because of the awareness of that.

And so, we have an increased number of shaving waivers. And, we have an increased number of those who are now complying with the waived ability to have a beard.

Mr. VEASEY. Are you pretty confident that it's not affecting people's careers and discharges? Have you all looked into that?

Because even though someone may get a waiver, you also want to make sure that there may be someone else that's not resentful of them getting the waiver. Because, you know, and we deal with this sort of stuff on this Committee all the time.

There's always a group of people that, well, it's been this way for 100 years. And, I don't understand why we've got it. You know what I mean?

And so, when trying to work through that, that sort of thing can be a career impediment to someone being able to advance. And so, is it something that everybody is embracing and understanding the importance of these waivers?

General ALLVIN. Yes. Congressman, I would say it is. I would also say it's a work in progress, because along the same line, there is also an increase in requests for religious accommodation along the same lines.

And so, my concern, not my concern, but my interest as the Chief, is to ensure that we respect that, and we honor that.

So, not only do we ensure that those who qualify for those actually achieve those, the exceptions to policy and the waivers. But, we also make sure that others aren't exploiting it.

Mr. VEASEY. Yes.

General ALLVIN. And so, we need to make sure on both sides of that.

Mr. VEASEY. General Saltzman?

General SALTZMAN. Yes. I think General Allvin said it just right. That the key is one, is having a good process to grant the waivers expeditiously and appropriately.

And then, second, is remove any stigma. And, make sure that those people that are accommodated are still respected, and there's no adverse impacts.

That's, the start of that is the sensitivity towards it. And then second, is about training and education and make sure everybody understands the situation.

Mr. VEASEY. Yes. And, you feel pretty confident about the educational process and being able, making its way through the ranks so everyone has an understanding of it?

General SALTZMAN. I like the way General Allvin said it, I think, it's a work in progress, because we've got to reach the entire group of people. But, I think we're making the right strides.

Mr. VEASEY. Okay. Good. And, as far as you know, there haven't been any recent discharges that anyone has faced because of this issue. Okay. Very good. Good.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Strong.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Smith. And, I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here.

Secretary Kendall, earlier this week I sent you a bipartisan letter that I co-led with Strategic Forces Ranking Member, Seth Moulton, expressing our strong support for the National Security Space Launch Program.

Ensuring that the United States has and maintains assured access to space. And, it's more important now than it ever has been.

I know this is a bit early to expect a response, since we only shared the letter to you two days ago. But, since you're here, you might as well go ahead.

Can you speak to the importance of the National Security Space Launch Program and to the benefits that are provided by utilizing block buys and encouraging robust competition within the launch industry?

Secretary KENDALL. Congressman Strong, thanks for your letter. I have seen it. And, I appreciate the support. The current program was put in place originally about 10, 12 years ago by myself and General Pawlikowski and the Air Force.

And, it was designed to provide a short access to space and to provide for competition. And, to bring new entrants in.

We went from buying rockets to buying launch services. And, the thing that has happened over those years, includes the emergence of more launch providers that we can tap into.

So, General Saltzman outlined that earlier, the Phase Three that is currently in competition, is designed to open up the aperture even more to take advantage of that.

And, the savings have been huge. The competition that has happened has allowed us to bring in new entrants and force prices down.

It's helped to encourage a lot of innovation. And, it's taken advantage of what's been going on in the commercial world.

So, I think that the program overall, has been a huge success.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. And north Alabama is proud to host several companies which contribute to the success of the NSSL, including Blue Origin, along with just refurbished the historic Apollo test stand, 4670, at Red Stone Arsenal.

That was in partnership with the City of Huntsville, Madison County Commission. And, it's great to have that test site back rolling for the testing of the BE-3 and the BE-4 engines.

United Launch Alliance, which has the largest rocket factor in the world in Decatur, Alabama, with 2.4 million square feet under-roof, celebrated a near-perfect launch of their new Vulcan rocket.

General Saltzman, Secretary Kendall, the United States leads the world in space exploration, research, and launch technology

and capability. Much of this is to the thanks of the hard work of thousands of Alabamians that don't call Huntsville and the rocket -- they don't call Huntsville Rocket City for nothing.

As this has been discussed at length today, China is determined to overtake U.S. dominance in space and advance in its own space program. I'm concerned that the Chinese exploitation of our technology components and suppliers threatens our nation's well-earned position of leadership and reliable access to and utilization of space.

One, how is the U.S. Space Force working to protect America's prominence in space?

General SALTZMAN. As hard as we can.

Mr. STRONG. There you go.

General SALTZMAN. That's the short answer. Sir, I can't tell you how important that is. And, I appreciate the question.

We see the execution of space capabilities as vital to not only the U.S. military, but our broader economic interests in the country as well, and, to those of our foreign partners.

But, we are now in a contested domain. And, we have to think about it differently. So, what used to be relatively simple to assure in space, is now complicated.

So, we are building more resilient architectures to account for the fact that space is contested. Secondly, our adversaries are using space against us and threatening the joint force, something I can't stand for.

And so, we're working hard to put counter-space capabilities in place to deny our adversaries those advantages.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. How are we protecting against U.S. intellectual properties from being stolen and used against us?

Is there anything in place to stop or hold U.S. companies accountable for taking adversary investments or succumbing to adversary influence?

Secretary KENDALL. The short answer is yes. There's a vicious process that I think you're familiar with, which reviews any business deals that involve acquisition of U.S. companies, particularly by possible hostile ownership.

We also use contractual obligations to protect intellectual property. And, we require cyber security protection by companies who we deal with to a certain level to ensure that their property is not as easily stolen.

We're under assault basically, by China in particular. But, also to a certain degree by Russia and others to acquire our intellectual property.

It comes in the form of a cyber assault. It comes in the cyber attacking. And, it comes in the form of acquisition of companies to acquire the technology.

It comes in the form of illegal ways of buying through a third party.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from New Mexico, Mr. Vasquez.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary Kendall, and Generals Saltzman and Allvin, for taking the time to be here today with us.

I have the privilege of representing New Mexico's Second District, home to Holloman Air Force Base and the 49th Wing, where we train the next generation of F-16 fighter pilots and MQ9 operating crews.

Now, I'm not going to ask you directly about this. But, I did just want to bring this issue up with you today and for the record that we recently lost over 50 MQ9 contractors that are part of the pilot training program.

And, we have heard conflicting reports, both from base leadership and from the MQ9 contractors who are former Air Force pilots themselves, about the operational readiness of the MQ9 program as it stands today at Holloman Air Force Base, because of the loss of some of this potential contract that was not renewed, which we are still fighting for. So, I want to bring that up to your attention.

Holloman is also home to the high-speed test track. It is one of the Department of Defense's most valuable tools to test and evaluate hypersonic weapons.

In March, George Rumford of the Test Research Management Center, testified before this committee and spoke about the questionable future of the 70-year-old asset that was originally designed to test airplane ejection seats. He told us, quote, if we're really going to test hypersonics, we're going to need a new track capability in our nation.

Base leadership at Holloman has also echoed a similar sentiment that the track is outdated, and a new one is needed to meet the testing demands of the future.

Secretary Kendall and General Allvin, the Air Force has considered proposals for the reconstruction, modernization, or complete replacement of Holloman's test track. But, we're not seeing any traction.

Could you provide us an update on what the Air Force's long-term plans are for the future of this test track?

Secretary KENDALL. Yes. We're aware of the importance of the track. Obviously, it is a very important asset, and there are concerns about its aging and its capabilities.

The Test Resource Management Center for the Secretary of Defense, part of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Office, is in the early planning phases about what to do about Holloman.

One thing that's under consideration is a second track, which would have some features that the first existing one does not.

So, it's under active review and consideration right now. But, it's still in the early phases of doing that, I think.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Secretary. And, I appreciate updates to our community in Alamogordo, Dona Ana County and Otero County, as to the future of the track itself. In particular, because it impacts jobs in the community.

But also, obviously with the emphasis and the budget request for hypersonic testing, we want to know if we're going to be part of the solution to test these weapons in the future.

Secretary Kendall and General Allvin, given Holloman's ability to conduct control and repetitive hypersonic testing, what would it mean for the department to lose access to this track?

Secretary KENDALL. It's an important research capability for us.

Mr. VASQUEZ. General?

General ALLVIN. I concur. It's one of those that we certainly anticipate using in the future and needing hypersonic tracks and those high-speed tracks.

It's not getting, we're not going to be going slower.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, General. With my remaining time, I want to focus on housing issues at Holloman Air Force Base.

Now, we were proud to secure a 6 percent increase in housing allowance from 2023 levels for service members at Holloman. But, rural communities like Alamogordo, continue to face challenges to meet our housing demands.

And, I recently heard from base leadership that despite the improvements ongoing at Holloman, we're still facing a housing shortage of about 1,100 people.

Does the Air Force have plans to increase collaboration with the City of Alamogordo, with local nonprofits, and with other entities to construct additional housing?

And, if not, what steps are you taking to address this issue to make sure that the readiness of our airmen and women, and their families, is met with the dignity that they deserve to have adequate housing?

Secretary KENDALL. We'll work with the community to address that concern. I don't know that that's happened yet. I was not aware of the problem at Holloman and nor at Alamogordo specifically.

There is a housing requirement to market analysis going to be conducted this summer. I think we can use that as a basis by which to move forward with the community.

General ALLVIN. I agree.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, General. Thank you, Secretary. I look forward to working with you on those issues and continuing to work with the base leadership at Holloman to make sure that I continue to be their advocate and bring these issues to your attention.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from Texas, Mr. Luttrell.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning everyone. And, thank you greatly for your service. General Allvin, this might be for you or for the Secretary.

I'm going to talk about the A-10s, which I don't know if that's a source of contention with you guys. But, I'm a big fan of the A-10 platform.

And, if I'm reading it correctly, we went from discontinuing the plane in the '20-'30s, late '20-'30s, to 2028. Correct?

Is that a fair statement?

General ALLVIN. Yes. I don't think we ever had it late in the '20-'30s. But, yeah, it currently is by the end of '28, there will be no, '28-'29 is when they'll be divested.

Mr. LUTTRELL. I just want to be on record saying, I think, that is the worst idea. As, someone who laid in the dirt with that plane over the top of my head protecting us, I'll leave it at that.

But, so are we cross-training the pilots that are flying the A-10 platform and moving them over to air transport?

From what I understand, we are deficient of pilots in the Air Force, correct?

General ALLVIN. We do have a pilot shortage on the staff level. But, to the answer to your question, Congressman, we actually are training the pilots and the maintainers.

And, quite frankly, part of the maintenance and operators, the pilot challenge that we have, is we had intended the modernization plan to be a divestment and a modernization scale and speed that was fairly fast.

Mr. LUTTRELL. That's not working out very well for us.

General ALLVIN. Well, it's not, because we are divesting too slow to be able to have the maintainers ready to work on the fifth-generation platforms, and, those A-10 pilots to be able to fly those fifth-generation aircraft.

So, we currently have a plan for every single one of those that are moving out of those, to be able to -- if it's there at the base on the active duty side, then we can move them.

We're very -- they're very mobile. We can put them in the fifth-generation platform.

Mr. LUTTRELL. If I'm hearing you correctly, it's just that the process is slowing itself down, not necessarily. We have the ability to put the pilots in place, because they most likely currently exist?

General ALLVIN. We can put the pilots in place. And, we are doing that. On the active duty side, it's a little bit simpler.

On the guard side, because they are, you know, fixed to their location, they will have to transition to the flying platform that replaces the A-10 there.

But, we are, we have a plan for, we are not planning on having any of those pilots or operators go unused.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Okay. Mr. Secretary, are you coming down to my State here in the very near future?

Secretary KENDALL. I'd be delighted to.

Mr. LUTTRELL. I thought you were going down to Texas A&M to see the hypersonic capabilities?

Secretary KENDALL. I'm headed to A&M tonight.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Tonight?

Secretary KENDALL. Um-hum.

Mr. LUTTRELL. So, you are coming.

Secretary KENDALL. I'll be there tomorrow.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Okay. Well, I'm excited to, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like to meet with you after the fact to see, to get your thoughts on what Texas A&M is doing in the hypersonic, in that space.

Secretary KENDALL. Um-hum.

Mr. LUTTRELL. And, I think none of us in here are strangers to where we need to be when it comes to hypersonics.

Secretary KENDALL. I'd be happy to talk to you about that.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Yes, sir. Can I talk to you about the crypto modernization issues that we're having in the Air Force?

And, if I'm correct, we're about a decade behind. Can you give me some --

Secretary KENDALL. We're behind.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Can you create a warm and fuzzy for me that we are moving properly and that this isn't going to be a problem?

Because then, I'm going to transition to General Saltzman. Sir, I did not mean to crash your office yesterday. It was great to meet you unexpectedly.

But, it's good to see you again today. Secretary, go ahead.

Secretary KENDALL. I think if we get into the details, you get classified pretty quickly on crypto modernization. But, it was not prioritized, I'll put it that way, for quite a few years while we were engaged in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

It just wasn't important at the time. So, we got behind. I recognized that about two years ago. General Brown and I addressed it.

And, we've been funding crypto-modernization, I think, at a robust rate since then. But, we were running to catch up.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Yes. But, most likely going to catch up. So, we don't have to have this conversation in the next couple?

I can get reelected?

Secretary KENDALL. Well, we need to get the, we need to have

--

Mr. LUTTRELL. We're not going to have to have this conversation in three years?

Secretary KENDALL. Well, I hope not. We need to actually get to the next round of crypto-modernization, because the threat is getting more troublesome over time.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Is there good communication between the Air Force and the Space Force with the Secretary, by, with, and through, so that the Space Force won't have these issues that the Air Force has kind of collected over the past decade?

Secretary KENDALL. I think I'll let my colleagues answer that question. I think, we have a lot of cooperation.

General SALTZMAN. We're in all the same meetings to make sure we understand exactly what the challenges are.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Okay.

General SALTZMAN. We build our budgets together to make sure they're synchronized so that we can roll out the capabilities in a comprehensive way.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Okay. I would just hate for us to walk into a dead end or fall on a sword when we don't have to. If we could take lessons learned not only from the Air Force, but from the other services.

Secretary KENDALL. Right. My mantra as Secretary has been one team, one fight.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Yeah. One team, one dream. I like it. Okay. Thank you, sir. Thank you all. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I go to the next one, I want to be able to say to you, I got the chance to tour Texas A&M, their Bush Combat Development facility.

They're not only doing some really cool hypersonic research out there, but some directed energy research that's fascinating. I'm a big fan of that. And also, the rail gun.

So, there's just a lot of stuff at Texas A&M.

Secretary KENDALL. Yeah. I've got a full day there. They're going to show me all of that, I think.

The CHAIRMAN. You'll come away impressed. It's pretty impressive.

Now, we have, Mr. Horsford of Nevada, is recognized.

Mr. HORSFORD. Thank you, Chairman Rogers and to the Ranking Member for this hearing. Secretary Kendall, it's great to see you again.

And, General Allvin, congratulations on your recent promotion. I look forward to working with you in your new position.

My District is home to Nellis Air Force and Creech Air Force Bases, which combined, host over 15 thousand military members and thousands of families who call Nevada home.

General Allvin, I've asked this question of Secretary Kendall and your predecessor. So, I want to make sure I get your perspective on it as well.

What role do you see Nellis Air Force Base and Creech Air Force Base playing as part of our national defense strategy?

General ALLVIN. Well, Congressman, thanks for that question. Because, I think, they're critical. Obviously, Nellis Air Force Base, between the warfare center and the virtual testing and training center, and our shadow operations center, where we're understanding how to integrate the advanced battle management system and the next generation C-2.

Put all those together, as well as the Nevada Testing and Training Range, and you have a nucleus for really some of the development, the concepts, and the capabilities and tactics, techniques, and procedures for Air Force going into the future.

So, that's critical. Obviously, we have the right ramp space. We have the right runways. We have the right training ranges. Everything is set up there.

With Creech, we obviously have the ability to conduct the, you know, the medium altitude, the MQ-9 and such as those unmanned aerial vehicle operations.

Between the two of them, I think it's quite critical to our future for the long term in the Air Force.

Mr. HORSFORD. I completely agree. And, we look forward to your leadership in that regard. Previously, Airmen at Creech Air Force Base received assignment incentive pay to help encourage retention and offset some of the additional costs associated with being stationed at Creech.

Creech has submitted a new request for approval of assignment incentive pay. And, it's my understanding that the Air Force is supportive of the request.

Can you discuss any movement and efforts to award assignment incentive pay for airmen stationed at Creech, please?

General ALLVIN. I'll have to get back with that, Congressman. Because there is a process, if it's gone through the base, it comes up to the major command. And then, it comes up to the headquarters.

Traditionally, those requests are made in association with undermanned units, not enough manpower there. But, we'll certainly look at the request coming from the base to major command.

Mr. HORSFORD. Yes. And, it is because of the unique element of what they do. It's not so much that there are fewer people. It's that the unique elements of what they do and that they have to go home at the end of their deployment every single day.

And, they need the wages to keep up with the cost of housing and childcare and other demands. So, if we could factor that into the criteria, I'd appreciate it.

Access to safe, secure, and affordable housing is another concern of the constituents that we represent. As recruits consider military service, the availability and affordability of adequate housing is a concern.

Nellis Air Force Base is among the installations with the highest levels of unmet housing need. This time last year, that unmet housing need meant that young airmen were being released into off-based community housing after 11 months.

It concerns me that since then, the issue has only worsened, with airmen now being released after only eight months. I don't have to tell any of you, but eight months is very short for the Air Force's requirements of 36 months time in service.

So, General and Secretary, can you speak to the importance of ensuring adequate housing availability for both recruitment and retention of our military members?

And, what is currently being done to address the needs of our young, unaccompanied airmen at installations such as Nellis?

General ALLVIN. It's a priority for us. And, we're making substantial investment in that area in our overall budget.

For Nellis specifically, we just did a dorm renovation there for about \$4.5 million. And, we are working on the potential to address the dormitory deficit with additional construction.

So, two dormitories at Nellis are being considered for MILCON right now.

Mr. HORSFORD. Now, those two replacements -- so you have the renovation, I know. And, thank you to the Chairman and the Ranking Member for working with me on the prioritization of those new dormitories.

But, we have older dorms that are coming out. So, it's just like in public housing, you're really not adding to the supply. You're replacing supply that has come off the market, if you will.

So, I really need leadership in the Air Force to understand this dynamic. The unique element at Nellis, being off base is not affordable.

And, in some cases, it's not safe. It's not in the best interest of the airmen and their family and our national defense.

So, I would really encourage leadership to work with me in this regard. And, thank you to the Chairman for your leadership as well.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here and what you do for our country. General Saltzman, I would like to ask you about an issue, a problem that has come up in our launch of national security assets.

And, especially because it's indicative of a larger problem that we have. There is the certification that United Launch Alliance is doing for the Vulcan.

They need a second successful flight to complete that certification process. And, they have a payload built by Sierra Space, the Dream Chaser.

So, everything was on a good track except the June date looks like it's going to have to slip three months to September, because of an environmental assessment that has to be done according to the FAA for not the reentry site at Patrick where it will land, or excuse me, Kennedy Space Center, but, at Vandenberg, which is a backup place.

Now, Vandenberg has been firing missiles for over 60 years. And, it was a backup, I believe, for the space shuttle, or maybe it was the actual. I don't know which.

But, it's been a backup or a landing site as well as a launch site for all kinds of missiles over the years. And yet, the FAA is calling for a new environmental impact statement.

And, you all were complaining, rightfully so, about how China is threatening to overtake us. Well, this is a self-imposed wound.

You know, we have these, and what, I believe, are excessive regulations. In this case, environmental regulations that are slowing down a national security launch capability, that's going to hurt our ability to get assets into space, or slow them down.

And, why are -- first of all, I don't like these regulations being there in the first place. But, if they're there, you've got to find a way to cut through the red-tape and get the job done.

So, why is this even a problem? And, why are we facing these kinds of delays when we look at China, and they're just moving so fast and overtaking us?

General SALTZMAN. Well, I appreciate the question and the concern. I share the concern with some of the interagency processes that we go through.

I can't speak in detail about the FAA certification process on this. I'm happy to dig into it. We do this on a number of cases where we're trying to accelerate the licensing and certification of capabilities.

I'm happy to get back to you with a more specific answer from the FAA.

Mr. LAMBORN. Would either of the two of you like to comment on this?

Secretary KENDALL. We'd have to look into the details of what you've described. I'm not familiar with it.

General ALLVIN. I concur.

Secretary KENDALL. That type of problem does come up. And, we have to work our way through, as you said, the red tape, when it does. You know, there are various organizations with jurisdictions that are affected by this.

I was just at Boca Chica where SpaceX has been waiting to work with the Interior Department on some of the environmental concerns associated with launching there. And, it was a significant delay.

And so, these things are something we just have to work through under our existing set of regulations.

Mr. LAMBORN. Well, please work on this. Because it shouldn't be any mystery why China is overtaking us when we let government agencies snarl us in red tape.

And, sometimes you just have to take the bull by the horns and cut through it. You know, you take a sword and just cut through the red tape.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from Florida, Mr. Gimenez.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, I'm late because I was actually at a very interesting hearing with the Select China Committee on space, and, the competition between China and us in space.

And, I looked over the budget for Space Force, and it looks to me like the request doesn't even keep up with inflation. The increase of \$400 million doesn't keep up with inflation.

It's really a reduction in your budget as far as really what's useful. In light of the fact that China is making unbelievable strides in space, General, are you okay with this budget request?

General SALTZMAN. I think, the budget is making solid advancements in the resiliency of the architecture. That was our primary concern over the last couple of years, is making sure we had that capability protected, so we could assure the vital effects that the joint force requires is always there for them.

The counter-space capabilities are where, I think, the timeline is not to my satisfaction. It's simply, it just takes time to get from the R&D phase into fielded operations.

And, resources can help with that. But, we had to make those tough choices to make sure that our existing capabilities would be in place and available to the joint force.

And now, we're moving as fast as we can to put those counter-space capabilities in place.

Mr. GIMENEZ. So, you said that you're not, the budget that you have, that you requested, is not what you would like for counter-space requirements?

Is that what you just said?

General SALTZMAN. The counter-space capabilities that hold at risk the PRC's ability to perform space-enabled targeting, is not where I'd like it to be.

We're still trying to put that in place as fast as we can.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Does this budget satisfy the requirements? Your requirements, what you think? Look, because that's the whole game, isn't it?

China is making these great strides in knocking us off in space. And, if we lose space, it really puts everybody else at risk.

So, you know, I'm looking at our sector as being critical to our national security. I mean, obviously, the Air Force is there. But really, everybody else depends on you.

If we don't have you, then a lot of the systems on the ground and, you know, on the oceans and the seas, and in the air, are really at risk.

So, I'm really concerned about the fact that, you know, the Defense Department is in effect, cutting your budget, at a time when you should actually be accelerating your budget and increasing that capability, and increasing our ability to defend the space domain.

General SALTZMAN. Well, I certainly appreciate you saying that. I agree with you that space is a critical domain and will be critical to the joint force.

I think, there were some hard decisions that had to be made based on the FRA constraints. I think we're doing everything we can to put those space capabilities in place as fast as possible.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Well, I would hope that the Chairman would take this into consideration. And, that we do something about it. Because I just, I'm not satisfied with the budget request.

I am not satisfied with a reduction in the budget at a time when China is making unbelievable strides in space. How many satellites do they have up in space right now, the Chinese?

General SALTZMAN. It's about nine hundred.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Nine hundred. How many did they have four years ago?

General SALTZMAN. Probably half of that.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Okay. Are you also, are you talking about directed energy? Which I'm also, you know, very interested in.

Are you afraid that China is developing a first strike capability in space?

General SALTZMAN. They're pursuing what I like to describe, as six categories of counter-space capabilities. There's a ground-based version and an on-orbit version of destructive ASATs, of RF jammers, and directed energy of weapons.

And, the PRC is pursuing weapons in all those categories.

Mr. GIMENEZ. To knock us out. And then deny the domain to us.

General SALTZMAN. It's pretty clear that that's the case.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Fair enough. One final thought. I just want to follow up on my colleagues and the bag, \$91 thousand worth of bushings that a machine puts out.

Mr. Secretary, we need to look at a better way to utilize commercial aspects in our purchasing. And, it actually makes no sense to me.

I know that this bag here, it's not OEM. It's actually an FAA(Federal Aviation Administration) approved equivalent, which is about one-third the cost.

And, in times of budgetary constraints like we have right now, we need to save every single cent we can, without compromising safety.

And, with that, I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Gentleman. The Chair now recognizes the Gentleman from Georgia, Mr. McCormick.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Secretary Kendall, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition, Frank Calvelli, recently expressed his excitement about the acquisition strategy for the third phase of the National Security Space Launch Program, which he describes as transformative in providing the most robust launch capability ever.

How will this transformative launch acquisition strategy help us maintain our competitive advantage over China and Russia?

And, is there synergy with private organizations right now doing a bunch of launches? I know that in our space, in our government and our private sector, we've had a lot of synergy.

Does that actually play into these transformative technologies?

Secretary KENDALL. There is a lot of synergy. The acquisition strategy that Mr. Calvelli was talking about, is an evolution from

a strategy that I helped put in place with the Air Force about ten years ago, which opened up competition.

And, it took advantage of what was going on in the commercial world. And, we started instead of buying rockets, which we had done before that, buying launch services. And, buying them, opening it up to commercial competitors.

The first one we certified was SpaceX. They're still involved. ELA(Enterprise License Agreement), as the incumbent, had essentially a monopoly for a long time. And, immediately prices came down dramatically.

This also spurred a lot of investment in technology. So, where we are today with the phase threes, as it's called, which is currently working its way through source selection, we have a lane for our most important payloads, where we want to have very high mission assurance.

And, we want to have suppliers there who have demonstrated conclusively that they are going to be reliable suppliers.

Mr. McCORMICK. Great.

Secretary KENDALL. Then, we have a lane for others, for our less high priority missions. Which is going to be wider open to more participants.

Mr. Calvelli opened up that first lane with the higher priority payloads to three potential launch providers. And, there are several who are available for the second lane.

Mr. McCORMICK. I just want to point out, I've got to kind of continue moving here. But, I agree with you. And, I love the fact that there's more competition driving the price down and the quality up, which is --

Secretary KENDALL. We love competition.

Mr. McCORMICK. That's American.

Secretary KENDALL. That's very effective.

Mr. McCORMICK. Love it.

Secretary KENDALL. I wish we had it for those bushings that you saw earlier.

Mr. McCORMICK. Me too. General Saltzman, you recently announced Space Force's goal of establishing a new Space Force Futures Command.

Can you share a little bit about the resource requirements for this new command and how it fits into the overall national security strategy?

General SALTZMAN. Well, I think, the resourcing requirements are actually going to be fairly modest. We've been doing a lot of these activities.

But, we've just been doing them in a very disaggregated kind of way. We have our Space Warfighting Analysis center out in Colorado Springs, which does some of the heavy data-driven analytics for our force designs.

But, we didn't have a place that was actually focused on figuring out which technologies to pursue. What are the right operational concepts to pursue. And then, a place where we could validate those using wargaming, and modeling, and simulation.

And so, what Futures Command does, is it pulls those all under a single commander that will have responsibility for that end-to-end enterprise approach.

Mr. McCORMICK. Great. And, Secretary Kendall, the Air Force recently announced its plan to reoptimize its force based on global competition.

However, shortly afterwards, the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 24 was published, citing concerns regarding the Air Force justification for reorganization, which concerned me too.

Do you have any concerns with the current plan to redesignate funding for this as Congressional special interest interjects itself?

Secretary KENDALL. We understand the Congress's concerns. And, we're going to work very closely as we develop detailed plans with the Congress and meet the requirements of the law.

I can understand the nervousness, if you will, about moving people and organizations around and making fundamental changes. We're going to try to avoid that.

We're going to try to keep the costs to a minimum. But, there will be some that we're going to work with the Congress on that.

So, I don't have any problem with the provision in law that was enacted. And, we're going to comply with it. And, we're going to try to lean forward to work closely with the Congress so that there's, you know, plenty of advanced notice about anything that we're thinking about doing.

Mr. McCORMICK. What's the biggest challenge in reconciliation between those two, maybe, conflicting viewpoints, as far as moving forward and reorganizing in a way that's going to be effective?

Secretary KENDALL. I don't see a fundamental conflict. We tried to communicate to the Congress what we intended to do before we announced our decisions.

We hadn't planned all the details yet at that time. And, we're still working on that. And, as we go through that, we're going to work closely with the Congress.

Mr. McCORMICK. Great. And, General Allvin, I'll talk to you off-line. I'm almost out of time right now. I want to talk to you about your medical stuff since it's near and dear to my heart as a former Navy ER doc. We've got some issues in the Air Force. But, we'll talk later.

Thank you. With that, I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. The Gentleman from Guam, Mr. Moylan, is recognized.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Kendall, you provided our office with Typhoon Mawar recovery cost estimates. Thank you for that.

And, in the statement there is approximately \$1.3 billion in FSRM, and, \$7.9 billion in MILCON. I assume this covers base housing?

And if so, the economic benefit for my constituents will be great. And, it will reduce the Air Force reliance on the local housing market.

With that said, can you please elaborate on some of the specific housing projects that are involved with this line of accounting?

Secretary KENDALL. Congressman, I'm going to have to get back to you on recommend for that. I can't go -- I'm not in a position to go into the details on that.

What you just held up is our estimate for what we need to do as a result of Typhoon Mawar. General Allvin and I were just

there, as you know, and, we saw, you know, some of that damage firsthand.

We were working within the Department to put together a supplemental to try to address those issues. But, we haven't been able to move that forward yet. But, we hope we can still do that.

Guam is a hugely important base to us. Anderson Airfield is very important to us. There were a lot of plans to increase the capacity and the resilience of the base.

So, we need to move forward on both of those fronts to get to where we need to be for such a critical hub in the Pacific.

Mr. MOYLAN. When those numbers come through, I'll be really interested to review it. I appreciate that. And, thank you for visiting the Island as well.

Next question, General Allvin, the University of Guam has an Army ROTC program, which has produced amazing officers and leaders who have positively impacted our Island.

That said, I wonder if there is any opportunity to expand an Air Force ROTC branch? Would you be able to speak on some feasibility of offering Air Force ROTC to our college students who attend the University of Guam?

General ALLVIN. Yes. Thank you for that. And, we certainly can. Of course, our Air Force ROTC Program is run through Air Education Training Command and Air University.

But, certainly, we have 145 detachments across. And so, just an application from the University and a conversation, we'll certainly be willing to take that on.

Mr. MOYLAN. I'll let the President know that. And, we'll send it your way. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Secretary KENDALL, just a final question. A major focus on the sustainment of our armed forces is recruiting efforts, obviously.

And, to date, we have Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy JROTC Programs on the Island. This leads to the patriotism of the people of Guam.

But, leaning back into the Air Force, can you briefly tell me about the Air University Flight Academy Program tailored to the Air Force JROTC?

And, I believe -- you know, so I believe this will be a great program like this, to provide and be extremely beneficial to the recruitment and sustainment of the future Air Force for our people of Guam as well.

Secretary KENDALL. It's a program where our people in the Air Force JROTC can apply for opportunities to fly. We've had one person from Guam, I think, take advantage of this.

It's been a few years since that was done. But, it's a good program. And, if you meet the requirements, and so on, we'd be happy to include people from Guam and additional people from Guam.

Mr. MOYLAN. We have great skies over in Guam too, and little traffic. So, that would be a great program for us as well.

Secretary KENDALL. Yes. Good point.

Mr. MOYLAN. I thank you very much to the panel. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Gentleman. I thank the witnesses. As we have heard here today, there are many threats and challenges facing our nation.

But, I am confident that you Gentlemen and the services you represent are up to the challenge. And, with that, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

APRIL 17, 2024

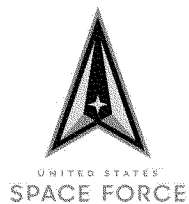
PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

APRIL 17, 2024

Department of the Air Force Posture Statement

Fiscal Year 2025

Department of the Air Force
Presentation to the Committees
and Subcommittees of the
United States Senate
and the House of Representatives
2nd Session, 118th Congress



Statement of:
The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force

General B. Chance Saltzman
Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force

General David W. Allvin
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

OVERVIEW

The President's Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget request continues the Department of the Air Force's (DAF) implementation of the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), while striking alignment with the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA). The DAF remains focused on the Department of Defense's mission to defend the U.S. homeland, safeguard and advance vital U.S. national security interests, and meet growing threats to a stable and open international system, especially those posed by our pacing challenge, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party. In line with the priorities of the Secretary of Defense, this budget request supports that **mission** and invests in the **people** and **teams** that are our decisive advantage.

The DAF is currently undertaking a Department-wide effort to optimize how we organize, train, and equip the Air Force and Space Force to meet the PRC pacing challenge. These efforts are necessary for us to remain competitive and are being undertaken with a strong sense of urgency. They cannot, however, substitute for the resources the DAF needs to execute its missions.

The total DAF budget request for FY25 is \$217.5B which includes \$188.1B for the Air Force and \$29.4B for the Space Force. This is an approximate 1.5% increase from the DAF FY24 enacted budget. The DAF had to implement some difficult tradeoffs and take risk in certain areas to stay within the funding levels provided under the FRA.

A forced reliance on funding through Continuing Resolutions has already significantly hampered the DAF's ability to keep pace with evolving threats by withholding authorization and appropriations to initiate new programs of record or increase spending on existing programs. Unfortunately, the time we have ceded cannot be recovered. Timely and consistent authorizations and appropriations for defense spending in line with this budget request are necessary to deter and, if required, defeat threats to our national security. Continued failure to provide on-time authority and appropriations will leave the Air Force and Space Force inadequately prepared for the dramatic geopolitical, technological, economic, and environmental challenges we are facing. To keep pace with the threats in the changing strategic landscape, we urge the Congress to enact this budget request without delay.

Responding to Increasing Threats

The threats to our national security are dramatically increasing. The 2022 NDS identified the PRC as the only country with the will and increasing capability to reshape the international order. In 2023, the PRC increased its annual military budget by approximately 7 percent with estimates showing it can support continued defense spending growth for at least the next five to ten years.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) already fields the largest aviation force in the Indo-Pacific region. It has combined a growing arsenal of long-range precision weapons with improving space-based capabilities to expand the capability of its long range kill webs and enable strikes against U.S. and Allied forces, air bases, carriers, and high-value airborne assets.

In addition to using space capabilities to target U.S. and partner terrestrial forces, the PLA is

rapidly increasing its fielded suite of kinetic and non-kinetic counterspace capabilities. These include antisatellite missiles, “inspection and repair” systems that can grapple and disable satellites on orbit, laser weapons and jammers, and reusable spaceplanes with a range of potential military uses.

The PRC is also advancing its electronic warfare and cyberspace attack capabilities to threaten U.S. bases and capabilities in the region and the U.S. homeland. For example, the PRC has targeted critical infrastructure in Guam that could be used to disrupt U.S. air operations.

The PRC has also continued its rapid nuclear expansion, on track to exceed previous projections, with more than 500 operational nuclear warheads and a nascent nuclear triad. China is moving ahead of expectations to field a nuclear arsenal comparable to that of the United States. The PLA Rocket Force has at least 2,800 theater class ballistic missiles and 350 international-range ballistic missiles, including hypersonic missiles, highlighting its approach to diverse potential nuclear-delivery systems. Many of these systems have dual-use (conventional or nuclear) potential.

We must keep pace with the growing military capabilities of the PRC while also managing the acute threat from Russia, deterring threats from other regional actors, while remaining vigilant to potential Violent Extremist Organization threats. Russia continues to place a strong emphasis on modernizing strategic weapons that will allow it to hold the United States homeland at risk, particularly with hypersonic and other next-generation weapons. Russia is developing and deploying a range of counterspace systems including surface-launched, air-launched, and orbital anti-satellite weapons, laser weapons, electronic warfare systems, and cyber capabilities that can threaten military and dual-use space assets. Both Iran and North Korea are also working to expand their military capabilities.

In the midst of these growing threats, the capabilities of the Department of the Air Force are integral to the four priorities of the NDS: defending the homeland; deterring strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies, and our partners; deterring aggression and being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary; and ensuring our future military advantage by building a resilient joint force and defense ecosystem. With budgetary pressure, the DAF budget request balances short-term risks and readiness against the need to rapidly modernize capabilities required to deter future threats and meet NDS priorities.

Complying with FRA

The DAF’s budget is aligned with the FRA. The global obligations and enduring missions of the DAF have not changed. Our global commitments have not changed. As a result, our force structure and human capital structure remain roughly constant from FY24. The requirements to maintain adequate operational readiness, support global deployments, and meet immediate mission requirements were met, but funded to the highest level of risk considered acceptable. For example, the so-called “foundational accounts” for Weapons Systems Sustainment, Facilities, and Flying Hours were funded at the lowest level considered acceptable in both the Air Force and the Space Force. This practice can be tolerated in the short term under the constraints of FRA.

With these “current force” related elements of the budget allocated, investments in the “future

force” were adjusted to manage risk. The DAF budget request protects essential modernization, especially the investments derived from our work on Operational Imperatives and Cross-cutting Operational Enablers, and chose to marginally reduce procurement of systems already in production in order to sustain as much as possible the planned pace of research and development funding for capabilities necessary to keep pace with existing and imminent pacing threats. Procurement accounts were adjusted downward in the Air Force from previously planned levels for some key programs, including F-35 and F-15E/X. Procurement accounts also decreased with fact-of-life delays in T-7 and E-7 production. The FY25 Air Force procurement account request is \$29.0B and the Space Force procurement account request is \$4.3B. These adjustments generally allowed research and development accounts to keep pace with inflation. They did not permit the desired growth over time. This is particularly true for the Space Force where transformational modernization is needed urgently.

Meeting National Defense Strategy Priorities

Defense of the Homeland

Our first priority remains defense of the homeland. The DAF supports this priority through investments in domain awareness, air and space defense, early warning that increases strategic deterrence and enables defense of critical infrastructure, and cyberspace defense programs. These investments are closely tied with the DAF Arctic Strategy and position the DAF to support implementation of the 2023 Homeland Defense Policy Guidance.

Deterring Strategic Attacks

Our second priority is to deter strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies, and our partners. The DAF provides two legs of the Nuclear Triad and 75 percent of Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3). The DAF’s full-scope nuclear modernization program recapitalizes all current systems and supporting infrastructure to deliver modern and credible deterrence capabilities, which are essential in today’s increasingly uncertain international environment. Decades of deferring modernization of Cold War-era systems, combined with adversary nuclear modernization, make it imperative to modernize U.S. nuclear forces to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent to protect the U.S. homeland, as well as Allies and partners.

DAF nuclear capabilities provide unique, complementary, and credible options in support of integrated deterrence. Decades of deferred modernization have left little room for error in our recapitalization program if we are to maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. The FY25 budget requests more than \$19.4B for nuclear modernization efforts including the Sentinel Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, B-21 Raider, Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC), Long-Range Standoff Weapon, Next-Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared programs, and the Evolved Satellite Communication System. Additionally, the Space Force is in the early stages of developing and fielding a more resilient missile warning and tracking capability focused on tracking advanced threats by integrating new critical missile tracking capabilities. While B-21 and LRSO are currently close to planned cost and schedule profiles, other programs are experiencing difficulties, and these programs have not completed development. Sentinel is undergoing a critical

Nunn-McCurdy review due to cost and schedule increases. The SAOC cost estimate has also increased and is putting pressure on the DAF's budget.

Deterring Aggression and Prevailing in Conflict

The third priority of our NDS is to deter aggression and be prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary. The DAF needs immediate and significant capability modernization to keep pace with the growing military capabilities of the PRC. Each year, the threat continues to advance as does our effort to define cost effective competitive operational innovation. The DAF deeply appreciates the "Quick Start" provision placed in the FY24 NDAA and will take full advantage of this opportunity to save precious time. Our effort to Reoptimize for Great Power Competition is intended in large part to create institutions with the mission of ensuring continuous competitiveness against our pacing challenge. The seven DAF Operational Imperatives and the Cross-cutting Operational Enablers body of work continues to guide the DAF's modernization effort. The FY25 DAF budget request includes \$6.1B for these efforts, \$4.0B in the Space Force and \$2.1B in the Air Force excluding B-21 investments available at a higher classification.

Building a Resilient Joint Force and Defense Ecosystem

The fourth NDS priority is to build a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem to ensure our future military advantage. Our Airmen, Guardians, and civilian teammates are the decisive advantage in our strategic competition, and this budget request invests to ensure they can serve to their full potential. Programs that respond to the most pressing problems of our Airmen, Guardians, and their families are detailed for each DAF Military Service in the sections below.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Strategic competition with the PRC while also managing acute and persistent threats requires the Air Force to modernize to maintain its preeminent status in the world. The Air Force continues to implement the programs identified under the Operational Imperatives and follow through on initiatives designed to maintain the Air Force's qualitative advantages over any competitor. The Air Force is investing in force structure and capabilities aligned with the NDS. As the strategic environment is rapidly changing and technology fundamentally alters the character of war we are in a time of consequence. The Air Force is determined to maintain its position as the leader in speed, agility, and lethality upon which the joint team, the Nation, and allies rely.

The FY25 Air Force budget request is \$188.1B. The Air Force budget invests in foundational accounts in an attempt to arrest the year-over-year degradation of the capabilities, operational readiness, and supporting infrastructure necessary to implement the NDS, but doing so mandates a slower rate of needed modernization which increases the risk to the DAF's overall readiness. The budget fully funds nuclear modernization programs to deter strategic attacks, continuing the most extensive recapitalization effort of the nuclear enterprise in the Air Force's history. (The recently announced Nunn McCurdy cost breach on the Sentinel ICBM program is still being addressed and final estimates are not available at this time.) It also continues investment in modernization focused on critical long-range kill webs (\$310.6M) and affordable mass (\$719.8M) central to the ability to deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression. This is in clear recognition of the

PRC pacing challenge and Russian acute threat. The Air Force budget request also invests in the Air Force's most precious asset--its Airmen--to ensure they remain the decisive advantage the Nation depends upon.

AIR FORCE'S ROLE IN DEFENDING THE NATION

For FY25, the Air Force must make difficult choices to balance risk today and into the future. Today, the Air Force is accepting risk across the Service's modernization accounts in order to maintain minimally acceptable near-term operational readiness. This places additional risk on the Air Force's ability to deter and defeat any adversary going forward.

The FY25 Air Force budget request prioritizes operational readiness in the current year and seeks to preserve previous years' substantial advances in modernization and procurement. The Air Force's operational readiness is near the minimum level acceptable for the Service to meet the Nation's demands.

While this budget attempts to sustain the modernization momentum created by the Operational Imperatives and Cross-cutting Operational Enablers, it takes risk in the medium term to balance immediate operational readiness needs at the level of maximum tolerable risk. The medium-term risk most noticeably impacts the Air Force's ability to field the Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) Family of Systems, as well as a mature Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (C3BM) system, the Air Force contribution to JADC2.

The Air Force is requesting \$2.1B to meet the immediate Operational Imperatives required to maintain the Air Force's qualitative advantage and ability to deter and, if necessary, win whenever called upon by the Nation. The Operational Imperatives provide the Service with critical capabilities, readiness investments, and the foundation required to transition and sustain a wartime posture against our pacing threat. Notably, the USAF FY25 budget request continues progress toward fielding an operationally optimized Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) (\$174M) that will improve situational awareness and provide decision-support tools to close hundreds of kill chains within relevant timelines while operating in a highly contested environment. The FY25 Air Force budget supports achieving moving target engagement at scale (\$177M), which will be decisive in a conflict with a well-resourced peer- or near-peer adversary. Fielding the NGAD Family of Systems (\$675M), particularly Collaborative Combat Aircraft, will allow the Air Force to augment current and future platforms with lower-cost complementary systems that can cost-effectively achieve control of the air in highly contested environments. The B-21 and its Family of Systems (details available at a higher classification) will be the backbone of the Air Force's bomber force and provide critical operational capability for both conventional and nuclear missions and provide precision effects en masse against targets worldwide. The Air Force is committed to building resilient forward basing (\$594M) that ensures sustainable and networked bases capable of sufficient sortie generation and mission execution in a contested environment. The Service is also investing toward securing the critical readiness required to mobilize and move the Air Force and Joint Force into theater (\$232.9M), including hardening mobilization and support capabilities against cyber and non-cyber threats. These investments represent significant efforts in critical systems and assets required by the increasingly challenging threat environment.

Among the Air Force's highest priorities is achieving electromagnetic spectrum dominance and an information advantage in highly contested environments. The Air Force's budget includes a \$50M budget request in FY25 for investment in EA-37B Baseline 4 capability enhancements and advanced waveform development. Furthermore, the Air Force is investing in mission resilience and adaptability efforts such as the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing's rapid reprogramming to ensure effective electronic attack, support, and defensive capabilities; synchronization efforts such as Air Combat Command's Electromagnetic Battle Management (EMBM). The Air Force's investments in electromagnetic spectrum dominance are vital to ensuring that the Nation's warfighters, Joint mission partners, and Allies build, achieve, and maintain mission effectiveness, survivability, and, ultimately, warfighting advantage over the Nation's adversaries. These efforts aid in maintaining the Air Force's credibility in both assurance and deterrence roles.

As the Air Force adapts to the changing strategic environment, we are reoptimizing every aspect of the Service around meeting the PRC pacing challenge. The Air Force is focusing organizations responsible for strategic readiness on current operational readiness, creating and/or elevating organizations that are critical to this strategic environment such as cyber and the nuclear enterprise, and creating a single command to focus on future capabilities. These reoptimization decisions make changes that are within the current authorities and, to the extent possible, the resources of the Department of the Air Force. As we strive to keep pace in a strategic environment where the competition has sustained and consistent growth in funding, these efforts alone will not be enough.

AIR FORCE'S ROLE IN TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE

The Air Force is committed to attracting and retaining the best Airmen in the world. In FY24, the Active Duty Air Force is currently on track to meet its recruiting goals. Air National Guard and Reserve recruiting are trending upward but continue to remain a challenge for the Service. The Air Force has continued to break down barriers to service and made progress thanks to Congress's significant support to provide requested pay increases and increasing economic security for Airmen through cost-of-living adjustments to basic pay, BAH, and BAS. Additionally, the Air Force is opening its bases to local communities to showcase the service to the public and connect with the Nation's possible recruits. The then VCSAF's cross functional team on Barriers to Service implemented 18 policy changes since Jan 2023 to expand future recruiting opportunities and increase eligibility to serve. These changes include accelerated naturalization at BMT, aligning the body composition to the DoD standard, and expanding the tattoo policy. These changes have provided tangible improvements without sacrificing quality. The CFT will continue to review and adjust DAF policies and initiatives to best address future recruiting challenges and amplify efforts to increase propensity to serve for all.

To maintain talent, the Air Force has focused on quality-of-life impacts for its Airmen, investing to ensure they have the resources required to thrive. The Air Force has concentrated on improving access to childcare; this budget request includes a \$40.0M MILCON submission for a CDC at Mountain Home AFB, on top of 11 CDC MILCON projects that the Air Force is executing in FY25, and \$50M in Facilities, Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization focused investment in CDCs. The Service is also on track to implement the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military's recommendations and programs as approved by the Secretary of

Defense, expanding victim care and support for victims of sexual assault. Specifically, the Air Force is increasing the presence of embedded mental health personnel in line units to prepare for contingency operations. Demand for these mental health services has increased twofold over the last decade while mental health manning has remained relatively unchanged. To offset the lack of providers, the Department of the Air Force is training service members at every level on basic mental health skills. The Air Force has also invested in Interpersonal and Self-Directed Violence Prevention and Response with \$451M in the FY25 budget request to implement initiatives supporting and protecting Airmen.

Quality of life also demands the best living and working facilities possible. Due to fiscal constraints resulting from the FRA, the Air Force was unable to reduce the \$46.8B of deferred maintenance and repair backlog, nor achieve the 2.3% plant replacement value (PRV) reinvestment goal envisioned in the Infrastructure Investment Plan. The FY24 budget request set this goal at 1.58% and the FY25 budget request reduces it to 1.5%. Additionally, the existing CR has directly impacted the Air Force's ability to release funds and award dormitory contracts in the current fiscal year. The inability to release funds increases risk to meet the Air Force's dormitory investment goal of \$1.1B by 2026, and the inability to fund and award dormitory projects in FY24 will roll into FY25. However, with this budget request, the Air Force will meet the FY22 NDAA requirement to invest at least 5% of the estimated replacement cost of the total inventory of permanent party dormitories for facility improvements. The Air Force is deliberately investing to sustain adequate dormitories. The FY25 budget request includes a planned investment of \$250M for future prioritization of dormitory repair, but that does not include FY24 rollover due to funding delays. The Air Force is also engaging with local leaders to increase the availability of affordable housing options for families. These moves, along with the substantial increase in BAH for many localities, have increased housing opportunities and living facilities for Airmen.

To be the best, we must manage our Airmen's talent. The Air Force is defining new Total Force skills required to meet the demands of Air Force Force Generation (AFFORGEN), Agile Combat Employment, and Future Force Design. As part of reoptimization, the technical tracks for Officers and Enlisted Airmen as well as the introduction of Warrant Officers for Cyber and IT, seek to attract and retain the critical talent needed in fast-paced and rapidly evolving critical technology sectors that are shaping the modern battlefield. We are also improving talent management by investing in processes and systems that increase agility, flexibility, and data access. The Air Force is exploring ways to identify the most innovative Airmen, network them, and ensure they can field innovative solutions to meet the Air Force's most significant challenges.

AIR FORCE'S ROLE IN SUCCEEDING THROUGH TEAMWORK

Teamwork is critical in the total Air Force, including the Reserves and the Air National Guard, all as part of the Joint Force meeting the NDS objectives. That teamwork begins within the DAF, where the Air Force relies on and supports the Space Force. Both Services depend on each other in developing and fielding the Operational Imperatives and achieving the Department's reoptimization efforts. Cooperation of both the Space Force and Air Force is required to meet the challenges posed by the nation's adversaries. The ability to conduct precision strikes, engage moving-targets, close kill chains, and build situational awareness in a highly contested environment requires the seamless integration of both Services. The Air Force and Space Force

are inexorably intertwined, ensuring that both services, the Joint Force, and our allies and partners will prevail wherever called upon.

Meeting our pacing challenge also demands that the Air Force seamlessly integrate with the larger Joint Force, the combatant commands, and our allies and partners. This is the essence of Integrated Deterrence. As part of the reoptimization efforts, the Air Force is executing large-scale exercises to test its capabilities against peer threats in highly contested environments and re-designing force presentation models to ensure combatant commanders most stressing operational needs are met. The FY25 budget includes \$428M in investment to support the integrated priority lists of the combatant commanders. The Operational Imperatives and capability investments across the Service are critical to ensuring the Joint Force can succeed against the pacing challenge.

While the Air Force focuses on supporting the Joint Force in meeting the NDS priorities, the Service also realizes that Allies and partners are a center of gravity for United States national security. Allies and partners facilitate access, basing, and overflight. The Air Force is committed to working with our Allies and partners, especially in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East, to advance an international order grounded in rules and norms. The Air Force continues to streamline FMS programs and work with allies to develop interoperable capabilities beginning from the initial design of systems.

Teamwork is also required with the Defense Industrial Base to ensure a robust industry that is the world leader in technology and production capacity that can adapt at speed and scale. As we promote the strength of the Defense Industrial Base, the Service is working with industry partners on delivering relevant capabilities with increased speed and capacity and ensuring mission-dependent supply chain and logistics resilience.

Teamwork inside the Department of the Air Force; the Joint Force; the Defense Industrial Base; and Allies and partners will be the cornerstone of integrated deterrence and combat capability in strategic competition with the PRC. The interdependence of these forces demands constant attention to drive seamless integration and interoperability. Unity in action and capabilities developed between the Air Force, Joint Force, and Allies and partners will provide our Nation and our Allies an advantage that no potential adversary can match.

Perhaps as much as any time in history, teamwork is required across the whole of our government to tackle the increasingly complex and dangerous challenges that face our Nation. The Air Force will continue to work transparently and collaboratively through the Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense, Executive Branch, and Congress to field and maintain the most ready and dominant Air Force for the Nation.

UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

Since its establishment in 2019, the United States Space Force has focused on one, overarching imperative: *to secure the Nation's interests in, from, and to space*. As the threats in space to American prosperity and security both increase and become more sophisticated, the Space Force must transform and therefore, it is prioritizing investments that prepare the Joint Force and the Nation to confront the dangerous operating environment that space already has become. This

transformation is severely complicated by the constrained fiscal environment, which has forced the DAF and the Space Force to make hard choices.

SPACE FORCE'S ROLE IN DEFENDING THE NATION

The world's use of space is growing at an accelerating rate, making space simultaneously more important and more dangerous. The domain is no longer the benign expanse of the past. Counterspace threats continue to destabilize the environment, and space-enabled attack increasingly holds the Joint Force and our homeland at risk. The PRC, and to a significant extent Russia, have operationalized space. The United States has not kept pace. With space undeniably defined as a warfighting domain, the Nation depends upon the Space Force to secure its interests in, from, and to space.

To meet this challenge, the Space Force has organized its modernization efforts around a theory of success that aims to protect the Nation and its interests, while also preserving stability and long-term usability of the domain. This approach adheres to three guiding principles: (1) avoid operational surprise in the space domain, (2) deter attacks against U.S. interests in space and (3) prevent an adversary from using space to attack our homeland or the Joint Force. The destruction of forces in space risks creating long-lasting hazards and indiscriminate risks. For this reason, the Space Force's concept of space superiority seeks to protect U.S. interests without jeopardizing the future of the space domain.

Avoiding operational surprise in space requires the Space Force to maintain constant awareness of the battlespace, supplemented by a robust capability to accurately produce indications and warnings for malign behavior. Over 8% of the Space Force's FY25 budget is dedicated to this purpose. Specifically, the Space Force budget invests \$1.25B into the space domain awareness mission area, including funding for the Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability, SILENTBARKER, and Space Data Fusion. These programs extend the Space Force's umbrella of awareness in the space domain, by establishing a clear picture of the operating environment and denying adversaries the ability to strike U.S. assets without warning.

To deny the benefits of a preemptive counter-space strike, the Space Force must build resilient space capabilities that guarantee continuity of critical services to the Joint Force despite current and growing adversary counterspace forces. These critical services include missile warning; communications; targeting; and Position, Navigation and Timing. The Space Force must transform these services to make them resilient to attack. As airborne systems providing communications and targeting have become more vulnerable and as threat long-range precision strike systems have proliferated, the Joint Force dependency on space is significantly increasing. To that end, the Space Force budget invests \$2.58B, or 55% of the total space-based missile warning budget, to field a proliferated multi-orbit missile warning network. Operating across different orbital regimes and sensor types, this hybrid approach complicates an adversary's attack options against U.S. space assets, enhances resiliency of a no-fail warning mission, and assures critical decision-making data will be available at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. The Space Force is procuring two additional GPS-III-F vehicles. Presently, there are 31 satellites in orbit with four in storage and two slated for launch in FY25. Simultaneously, the Space Force is researching more resilient PNT options. The FY25 budget also devotes \$4.4B to developing satellite communications (SATCOM)

systems capable of operating through contested and degraded environments. The Space Force is working to ensure that all of its capabilities can deter, overcome, and operate through enemy action.

\$7.25B—nearly a quarter of the Space Force’s FY25 funding—invests in the ability to counter an adversary from using space to attack the U.S. homeland or the Joint Force. This set of investments, which cannot be discussed in detail in an unclassified setting, is a major transformational effort for the USSF because it enables the newest Space Force mission, space superiority. The need to gain and maintain space superiority over peer adversaries is the distinguishing characteristic of a transformed Space Force and it is a top priority. Unfortunately, the compounding effects of Continuing Resolutions and the FY25 top-line funding constraints under the FRA have had significant impact on the Space Force’s ability to meet the demands of this critical mission.

Finally, to reoptimize for the pacing challenge, sustain our long-term competitive advantage, and ensure the relevance of our technical investments, the Space Force is establishing a Space Futures Command. Overseeing the forward-looking force design process by which we determine our objective force, Space Futures Command will provide vital structures and processes for our force development activities. Working closely with the Air Force Research Laboratory this Command will routinely assess the relevancy of and make recommendations on the priority of areas of scientific research. This will provide a clear and consistent demand signal to all partners, unambiguously identifying the technologies we consider to be essential to our success.

The Space Force is in the early stages of a major transformation, from a force focused only on peacetime capabilities to a force that also includes the full range of warfighting capabilities. The Space Force we have today, no matter how ready it is, does not have the range of capabilities needed against the pacing challenge. Preserving current force capabilities is necessary but not sufficient. We must invest to transform our legacy space capabilities into a credible warfighting force to deter and, if needed, to defeat our adversaries; and we must do so with a sense of urgency. This requires on-time and stable funding. Continuing Resolutions force the Space Force to rearchitect programs, miss launch windows, and break delivery timelines, spreading mission delays across the FYDP. For example, hypothetical year-long CRs can force the Space Force to slow its launch procurements, precipitating impacts for years to come by reducing the capability it can get on orbit, creating industrial base challenges, delaying test and training activities, and generating more barriers to its transformation.

SPACE FORCE’S ROLE IN TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE

The Space Force’s small but technologically sophisticated workforce means the Space Force must deliberately manage talent on an individual basis. In 2023, Congress passed the Space Force Personnel Management Act. This landmark legislation will enable the Space Force to build a modern personnel management system that will better allow the Space Force to develop and retain the elite military cadre it needs to be competitive and successful. The permeability between full-time and part-time military service the single component creates will allow Guardians of the relatively small Space Force to flexibly manage their careers and better meet their personal and professional goals while meeting Space Force operational needs.

The Space Force is also piloting the Defense Civilian Training Corps in FY25. This program, which will act as a civil service counterpart to the Reserve Officer Training Corps program, will recruit civilian Guardians with desirable backgrounds following the completion of their undergraduate education. Additionally, FY25 resourcing will allow the Space Force to expand developmental opportunities for all Guardians. Here, the first step will be a redesigned Officer Training Course. Under this program, all newly accessed officers will attend the same initial skills training course to learn the fundamentals of cyber operations, intelligence, and space operations. This combined initial skills training will ensure all officers have a comprehensive operational background prior to pursuing more specialized duties like acquisition. The Space Force is truly committed to being operationally focused.

The demands placed on Guardians continue to grow as space becomes a more dangerous operating environment. To prepare for this challenge, Guardians must be able to develop, train, and exercise their operational tradecraft in a secure environment against high-fidelity simulated threats. To meet these requirements, the Space Force is building the necessary test and training infrastructure from scratch. In FY25, the Space Force budget invests \$438.7M into the Operational Test and Training Infrastructure (OTTI) program. The Space Force is also expanding its investments in the test enterprise to account for the electromagnetic and orbital warfare mission areas. Recently, the DAF organized all of these activities under a single Program Executive Officer, ensuring resourcing transparency, accountability, and interoperability across the test and training enterprise.

One personnel challenge the Space Force faces as a small service is creating the organizational capacity to perform current operations while simultaneously building operational readiness for a high-intensity conflict. To better balance these two, the Space Force is formalizing how it builds operational readiness in combat force elements. The Space Force is accomplishing this by implementing the Space Force Generation model for readiness, which is made possible by a requested additional \$344.2M invested across several accounts. This investment enables a rotational model for Employed-in-Place missions, allowing personnel to accomplish threat-focused combat training before they are presented to the combatant commanders for day-to-day operations.

SPACE FORCE'S ROLE IN SUCCEEDING THROUGH TEAMWORK

The Space Force is not just an important teammate, but an essential one to the Joint and Combined Force. Broader operational success across all domains and theaters will depend on the Space Force succeeding in its missions. First, the Space Force provides services that the Joint and Combined team must have, or they will fail. Achieving that requires not just fielding effective capabilities joint warfighters need, but also securing those capabilities from adversarial attack. Second, the Space Force protects the Joint and Combined team from space-enabled attack. The Space Force cannot succeed in either regard without robust relationships across the U.S. enterprise and with indispensable Allies and partners.

To that end, partnerships with the other Services and throughout the Joint Force is a top Space Force priority. In FY24, the Space Force established several service components to integrate Space Force capabilities and expertise into the Combatant Commands. For example, the Space Force established U.S. Space Forces Europe and Africa, giving both USEUCOM and USAFRICOM a

dedicated team of experts in space planning and operations. The FY25 budget invests an additional \$27.8M to build service components in support of every Combatant Command. Once fully implemented, this program will give every Combatant Command access to Guardians who can help integrate space capabilities into their joint operations.

Nationally, there are many agencies and organizations with equities in the space domain. This is why the Space Force is partnering with a variety of government agencies to unify effort and leverage common interests for mutual benefit in space. For example, space-based surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting is a critically important emerging mission area for the Space Force. Therefore, the Space Force is working with the intelligence community, as well as industry partners, so that the Space Force can accomplish this important mission as part of the Joint Force.

As a highly technical service, the Space Force depends on a strong industrial base. An eighth of the Space Force FY25 budget is dedicated to commercial space services which will help reinforce and energize the space industrial base our nation depends upon. Moreover, the Space Force is continuing to develop its commercial space strategy within the larger DAF and Department of Defense industrial policy framework to identify areas for deeper partnerships with the diverse commercial space market.

The Space Force can no longer afford to delay its necessary transformation. Space capabilities are foundational to how the Joint Force projects power across the world and are increasingly at risk—they are old, vulnerable, and already not fully meeting joint warfighter needs. Lessening these risks requires transformational change—transcending the status quo and making smart investments in not just new systems, but also people—America's Guardians

CONCLUSION

The Department of the Air Force is in a race for technological superiority against a well-resourced strategic competitor. The United States is now facing a competitor with national purchasing power that exceeds our own, a challenge we have never faced in modern times. The PLA is actively developing and expanding capabilities to challenge strategic stability, attack our critical space systems, and defeat our ability to project power, especially air power. Conflict in the Indo-Pacific region is not inevitable. The United States is actively working to prevent conflict by strengthening combat-credible deterrence. However, acute and persistent threats still exist, and the security and prosperity undergirded by the United States military for decades is increasingly challenged. The DAF FY25 budget request is focused on addressing this reality. The DAF has funded current readiness accounts at the lowest acceptable level while investing remaining resources in essential modernization. Some Air Force procurement has been deferred to free up funding for new capabilities in development. The Space Force lacks similar trade-off options, forcing delays in needed systems, especially counterspace systems. The DAF FY25 budget request is aligned with the NDS. It addresses mission requirements while taking care of people and fulfilling our role in the Joint, interagency, and combined team. We urge timely approval of this budget request to allow us to keep pace with the challenges facing the United States.

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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FRANK KENDALL



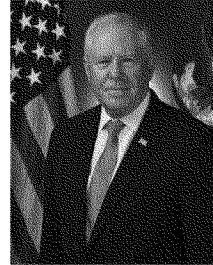
BIOGRAPHY

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FRANK KENDALL

Frank Kendall is the 26th Secretary of the Air Force responsible for organizing, training, and equipping the U.S. Air and Space Forces. In this capacity, he directs the Department of the Air Force's annual budget exceeding \$173 billion, provides Air and Space forces to combatant commanders for global military operations, and is accountable for the welfare of nearly 700,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian Airmen and Guardians and their families.

Mr. Kendall has more than 50 years of experience in engineering, management, defense acquisition, and national security affairs across private industry, government, and the military. He was a consultant to defense industry firms, non-profit research organizations, and the Department of Defense in the areas of strategic planning, engineering management, and technology assessment. Additionally, he is an attorney and was active in the field of human rights, working primarily on a pro bono basis.



Earlier in his career, Mr. Kendall was Vice President of Engineering for Raytheon Company, providing management and direction to the engineering functions throughout the company and for internal research and development. He also served as a Managing Partner at Renaissance Strategic Advisors, a Virginia-based aerospace and defense sector consulting firm.

Within government, Mr. Kendall held numerous posts including Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics as well as Deputy Director of Defense Research and Engineering for Tactical Warfare Programs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is a former member of the Army Science Board and the Defense Intelligence Agency Science and Technology Advisory Board, and was a consultant to the Defense Science Board.

Mr. Kendall is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served 11 years as an active duty Army officer, including assignments in Germany, teaching Engineering at West Point, and in research and development positions.

EDUCATION

1971 Bachelor of Science, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
 1972 Master of Science, Aerospace Engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.
 1980 Master of Business Administration, C.W. Post Center of Long Island University, Orangeburg, N.Y.
 1994 Graduate, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pa.
 2004 Juris Doctoris, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY

1. June 1971 – June 1982, active duty U.S. Army officer, various assignments; continued service as U.S. Army Reserve officer retiring as a lieutenant colonel in January 1999
2. June 1982 – April 1986, Systems Engineer and later Director, Systems Analysis Office, U.S. Army Ballistic Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, Ala.
3. April 1986 – December 1988, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic Defense Systems, U.S. Department of Defense, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
4. January 1989 – September 1994, Deputy Director of Defense Research and Engineering for Tactical Warfare Programs, U.S. Department of Defense, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
5. December 1994 – November 1996, Vice President for Engineering, Raytheon Company, Herndon, Va.
6. January 1997 – December 2007, private consultant
7. January 2008 – March 2010, Managing Partner, Renaissance Strategic Advisors, Arlington, Va.
8. March 2010 – May 2012, Principal Deputy Under Secretary and also Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, U.S. Department of Defense, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
9. May 2012 – January 2017, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, U.S. Department of Defense, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
10. July 2017 – July 2021, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C.
11. July 2017 – July 2021, Member of the Board of Directors, Leidos, Inc., Arlington, Va.
12. July 2021 – present, Secretary of the Air Force, Department of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster

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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FRANK KENDALL

Army Commendation Medal
National Defense Service Medal
Distinguished Public Service Award (four awards)
Secretary of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Medal
Presidential Rank Award of Distinguished Executive (Senior Executive Service)
Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Executive (Senior Executive Service)

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

2016 Aviation Week and Space Technology Person of the Year (together with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work)

PUBLICATIONS

"Getting Defense Acquisition Right," Defense Acquisition University Press, 2017

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Former Chair of the Board of Directors, Tahrir Justice Center
Former Board Member, Amnesty International USA
Former Board Member, Center for Victims of Torture
Former Board Member, Truman National Security Project
Former Board Member, Truman Center

(Current as of May 2022)





BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

GENERAL B. CHANCE SALTZMAN

Gen. B. Chance Saltzman is the Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Space Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of all organic and assigned space forces serving in the United States and overseas. As members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Space Operations and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council, and the President.



Gen. Saltzman is a graduate of Boston University and was commissioned in 1991. He has operational experience with missile and space systems, as a Minuteman III launch officer, and as a satellite operator for the National Reconnaissance Office. He also served as the first Chief of Combat Plans for the Joint Space Operations Center, and later, as Chief of Combat Operations.

Gen. Saltzman has commanded at the squadron, group, and wing levels including the 614th Space Operations Squadron and 1st Space Control Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California; the 460th Operations Group at Buckley AFB, Colorado; and the Aerospace Data Facility Colorado, Aurora, Colorado. Before serving in his current assignment, Gen. Saltzman was the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Operations, Cyber, and Nuclear, United States Space Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

EDUCATION

1991 Bachelor of Arts, History, Boston University, Mass.
 1992 Distinguished Graduate, Undergraduate Missile Training, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.
 1994 Master of Public Administration, University of Montana, Missoula
 1997 Air Assault School, Fort Belvoir, Va.
 1998 Master of Strategic Management, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
 1998 Distinguished Graduate, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2001 Distinguished Graduate, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
 2004 Distinguished Graduate, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2005 School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2006 Air War College, by correspondence.
 2009 Senior Developmental Education National Fellowship, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
 2010 Director of Space Forces Course, National Security Space Institute, Colorado Springs, Colo.
 2011 Leadership Enhancement Program, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC
 2014 Joint and Combined Warfighting School, Joint Professional Military Education II, Norfolk, Va.
 2017 Continuous Process Improvement for Executives, Institute for Defense Business, Durham, N.C.
 2017 Enterprise Leadership Seminar, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 2018 Leadership Decision Making Course, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

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B. Chance Saltzman

2018 Combined Force Air Component Commander Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 2021 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. March 1992–July 1992, Student, Undergraduate Missile Training, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.
2. July 1992–June 1996, Missile Combat Crew, 10th Strategic Missile Squadron and Wing Missile Combat Crew Instructor and Evaluator, 341st Strategic Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
3. July 1996–May 1998, Air Force Intern, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
4. June 1998–June 2001, Flight Commander, OD-Four, National Reconnaissance Office, Onizuka Air Station, Calif.
5. July 2001–June 2003, Instructor, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
6. July 2003–June 2004, Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
7. July 2004–June 2005, Student, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
8. July 2005–June 2006, Chief, Combat Plans Division, Joint Space Operations Center, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
9. July 2006–June 2007, Commander, 614th Space Operations Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
10. July 2007–June 2008, Commander, 1st Space Control Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
11. July 2008–June 2009, National Security Fellow, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
12. July 2009–May 2010, Chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Division, Directorate of Operational Planning, Policy and Strategy, Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
13. June 2010–June 2012, Commander, 460th Operations Group, Buckley AFB, Colo.
14. June 2012–June 2014, Commander, Aerospace Data Facility – Colorado, Buckley AFB, Colo.
15. June 2014–February 2015, Deputy Director, Plans and Programs, Headquarters Air Force Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colo.
16. March 2015–May 2016, Executive Officer to the Commander, Air Force Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colo.
17. June 2016–May 2017, Director of Future Operations, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
18. June 2017–May 2019, Director of Current Operations, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Headquarters Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
19. May 2019–May 2020, Deputy Commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command; Deputy, Combined Force Air Component Commander, U.S. Central Command, Southwest Asia
20. June 2020–August 2020, Special Assistant to the Vice Chief of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
21. August 2020–November 2022, Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Operations, Cyber, and Nuclear, United States Space Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
22. November 2022–Present, Chief of Space Operations, U.S. Space Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

<https://www.spaceforce.mil/DesktopModules/ArticleCS/Print.aspx?PortalId=1&ModuleId=743&Article=2329659>

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B. Chance Saltzman

1. July 2005–June 2006, Chief, Combat Plans Division, Joint Space Operations Center, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., as a major
2. July 2006–June 2008, Chief, Combat Operations Division, Joint Space Operations Center, Vandenberg AFB, Calif., as a lieutenant colonel

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
 Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters
 Defense Meritorious Service Medal
 Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
 Air and Space Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster
 Joint Service Achievement Medal
 Air and Space Achievement Medal

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Thomas D. White Space Award
 National Reconnaissance Office Gold Medal

PUBLICATIONS

"Minimum Deterrence and Its Critics," with James Wood Forsyth Jr., Strategic Studies Quarterly, Winter 2010
 "Remembrance of Things Past: The Enduring Value of Nuclear Weapons," with James Wood Forsyth Jr. and Gary Schaub Jr., Strategic Studies Quarterly, Spring 2010
 "Stay Out: Why Intervention Should Not Be America's Policy," Strategic Studies Quarterly, Summer 2009
 "Introduction to the United States Air Force," with Tom Searle, AFROTC Text (AS200), Airpower Research Institute, 2001

BADGES AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

Command Space Badge
 Missile Operations Badge
 Air Assault Badge
 Weapon Systems: Minuteman III, Defense Support Program, Space Based Infrared System

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant May 15, 1991
 First Lieutenant Oct 18, 1993
 Captain Oct 18, 1995
 Major Aug 1, 2002
 Lieutenant Colonel Mar 1, 2006

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B. Chance Saltzman

Colonel Oct 1, 2009
Brigadier General July 3, 2016
Major General Sep 4, 2019
Lieutenant General Aug 7, 2020
General Nov 2, 2022

(Current as of November 2022)





GENERAL DAVID W. ALLVIN

Gen. David W. Allvin is the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 689,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

Gen. Allvin graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1986. He has commanded at the squadron and wing levels, including the 97th Air Mobility Wing, Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. He has held major command staff assignments and served on the Joint Staff.

Gen. Allvin served as Commanding General, NATO Air Training Command - Afghanistan; Commander, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, Kabul, Afghanistan; Commander, 618th Air and Space Operations Center, Director, Strategy, Concepts and Assessments; Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force and Director, Strategy, Plans and Policy, Headquarters U.S. European Command; Vice Director, Strategy, Plans and Policy, the Joint Staff; and Director for Strategy, Plans and Policy, J-5, Joint Staff. Prior to his current assignment, the general was the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

Gen. Allvin is a command pilot with more than 4,600 hours in over 30 aircraft, including 800 flight test hours and 100 combat hours.

EDUCATION

- 1986 Bachelor of Science, Astronautical Engineering, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 1989 Master of Science, Management, Troy State University, Troy, Ala.
- 1992 Distinguished Graduate, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
- 1998 Distinguished Graduate, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 1999 Master of Airpower Art and Science, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2000 Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence
- 2004 Distinguished Graduate, Master of Science, National Security Strategy, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
- 2006 Executive Leadership Seminar, Smeal Business College, Pennsylvania State University, College Park
- 2008 Program for Senior Managers in National Security, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
- 2008 Air Force Enterprise Leadership Seminar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- 2009 Program for Senior Executive Fellows, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- 2010 Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, N.Y.
- 2013 Combined Force Air Component Commander Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2014 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2020 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.

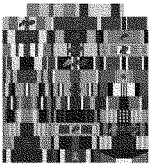
ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. June 1986–August 1987, Student, Undergraduate Pilot Training, 82nd Student Squadron, Williams Air Force Base, Ariz.
- 2. November 1987–August 1990, C-12F Copilot, Aircraft Commander, Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner, 58th Military Airlift Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
- 3. August 1990–June 1993, C-141B Copilot, Aircraft Commander, Instructor Pilot and Flight Examiner, 36th Military Airlift Squadron, McChord AFB, Wash.
- 4. June 1993–June 1994, Student, U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School, Edwards AFB,



EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant	
May 28, 1986	
First Lieutenant	
May 28, 1988	
Captain	
May 28, 1990	
Major	
August 01, 1996	
Lieutenant Colonel	
May 01, 2000	
Colonel	
July 01, 2005	
Brigadier General	
September 02, 2010	
Major General	
July 26, 2013	
Lieutenant General	
January 31, 2019	
General	
November 12, 2020	



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DAVID W ALLVIN

Calif.

5. June 1994–July 1997, C-17 Globemaster III and C-130J Super Hercules Experimental Test Pilot, Flight Commander, Flight Examiner and Assistant Operations Officer, 418th Flight Test Squadron, Edwards AFB, Calif.
6. August 1997–June 1998, Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
7. July 1998–June 1999, Student, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
8. June 1999–April 2001, Assistant Chief, Commander's Action Group, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill.
9. April 2001–June 2003, Commander, 905th Air Refueling Squadron, Grand Forks AFB, N.D.
10. June 2003–June 2004, Student, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
11. June 2004–June 2005, Chief, Organizational Policy Branch, Policy Division, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
12. June 2005–April 2006, Special Assistant to the Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
13. May 2006–July 2007, Vice Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph AFB, Texas
14. August 2007–July 2009, Commander, 97th Air Mobility Wing, Altus AFB, Okla.
15. August 2009–August 2010, Senior Air Force Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, N.Y.
16. September 2010–August 2011, Commanding General, NATO Air Training Command - Afghanistan, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan, and Commander, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, Kabul, Afghanistan
17. September 2011–April 2012, Vice Commander, 618th Tanker Airlift Control Center, Scott AFB, Ill.
18. April 2012–June 2013, Commander, 618th Air and Space Operations Center (Tanker Airlift Control Center), Scott AFB, Ill.
19. June 2013–September 2014, Director, Air Force Strategic Planning, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
20. October 2014–August 2015, Director, Strategy, Concepts, and Assessments, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements, HAF, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
21. August 2015–July 2018, Director, Strategy and Policy, Headquarters U.S. European Command, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany
22. August 2018–January 2019, Vice Director, Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J-5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
23. January 2019–November 2020, Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy, J-5, Joint Staff, and Senior Member, United States Delegation to the United Nations Military Staff Committee, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
24. November 2020–November 2023, Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.
25. November 2023–present, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 2004–June 2005, Chief, Organizational Policy Branch, Policy Division, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a lieutenant colonel then June 2005–April 2006, Special Assistant to the Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a colonel
2. September 2010–August 2011, Commanding General, NATO Air Training Command - Afghanistan, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan, and Commander, 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, Kabul, Afghanistan, as a brigadier general
3. August 2015–July 2018, Director, Strategy and Policy, Headquarters U.S. European Command, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany, as a major general
4. August 2018–January 2019, Vice Director, Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J-5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a major general
5. January 2019–November 2020, Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy, J-5, Joint Staff, and Senior Member, United States Delegation to the United Nations Military Staff Committee, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., as a lieutenant general

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: command pilot

Flight hours: more than 4,600

Aircraft flown: C-12F, C-141A/B, KC-135R/T, C-17, C-130, C-130J, C-23, F-15, F-16 and T-38

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Distinguished Service Medal
Defense Superior Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster
Bronze Star Medal
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with oak leaf cluster
Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air and Space Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
NATO Meritorious Service Medal
Non-Article 5 NATO Medal (International Security Assistance Force)
Medal of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine
Honor Emblem of the Romanian Armed Forces
Sweden Royal Order of the Polar Star Award

PUBLICATIONS

"Paradigm Lost: Rethinking Theater Airlift to Support the Army After Next," Cadre Papers, Sept. 9, 2000

(Current as of November 2023)



QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

APRIL 17, 2024

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. ROGERS

Mr. ROGERS. Can you explain what the process is for an FAA approved part to be considered and used on DoD Commercial Derivative Aircraft in your fleet? Also, what is the average length of time typically required for these approvals?

Secretary KENDALL. Considering a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved part for DoD Commercial Derivative Aircraft depends on its alignment with the original design certification. We use the FAA certification process if the original design certification covers the part. If the part is specific to a military use-case or is operated outside of the original certification, then we execute a DoD assessment through a reportable modification process. Depending on part complexity and safety criticality, design pedigree, program criticality, and data availability, it can take anywhere from a week to eight weeks for approval.

Mr. ROGERS. Are there any reasons why the Air Force cannot use non-critical FAA approved parts for its CDA fleet? Please explain.

Secretary KENDALL. If the FAA certifies the part, we can accept that certification if the Air Force usage aligns with the FAA certification. If the Air Force usage deviates from the original certification, we leverage that FAA process but execute an additional military-specific assessment. While the FAA assessment is based on full compliance, the Air Force has additional flexibility and can accept some risk of non-compliance if the part is mission critical.

Mr. ROGERS. Have the costs of CDA parts increased over the past 5 years?

Secretary KENDALL. Yes, we continue to see material cost increases across all aircraft programs. This is due to several factors, including inflation above planned levels, diminishing manufacturing sources and material shortages, and, in the case of commercial derivative aircraft, competition with the commercial sector for the limited supply of certain spare parts.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WILSON

Mr. WILSON. General Allvin, The Air Force is requesting to retire 190 aircraft for Fiscal Year 25, which would be a net loss of 130 aircraft if you compare aircraft procured versus retired. With China having the largest Air Force in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. needs to maintain a competitive presence in the region. 1) With the Air Force procuring less aircraft this year due to budget cuts, is the Air Force looking to retire less aircraft?

General ALLVIN. No, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) fighter strategy remains consistent with our imperative to modernize to meet the National Defense Strategy. Retaining today's legacy force structure comes at the cost of today's readiness or tomorrow's modernization. The fiscally constrained environment driven by the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act and reduced buying power necessitated difficult decisions, and we are seeing the impacts of that in the FY25 President's Budget. The DAF believes the FY25 budget represents the best option for spreading that risk over time.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GRAVES

Mr. GRAVES. Secretary Kendall, I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to an essential mission that is often overlooked yet crucial in supporting the National Defense Strategy. This mission is carried out exclusively by the 139th Airlift Wing in St. Joseph, MO, and is referred to as the Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center (AATTC).

The AATTC is now in its third decade of training mobility air force personnel serving in the Active, Guard, and Reserve, along with 18 other allied and partner nations. It is the primary center for aircraft tactics training and serves as the cornerstone for aircraft tactics, maintaining its reputation as the Mobility Air Force's "Tactics Center of Excellence." Personally, I like to refer to it as "the Top Gun for Airlift."

Secretary Kendall, Isn't it true that the National Defense Strategy highlights the critical importance of power projection in a contested environment as well as "innovation and partnerships" to deter and defeat near-peer competitors in great power competition? The Air Force's Air Mobility Command provides the capability to deploy U.S. armed forces anywhere in the world within hours and help sustain them in a conflict; and in a contested environment like the Indo-Pacific Region, having these Airlift crews trained in Advanced Airlift Tactics, is crucial to increasing the warfighting effectiveness and survivability.

The AATTC is the only place in the world that provides this kind of training. At the AATTC, we welcome allies and partners from all over the world to undergo training. During these sessions, they bring C-130Js. Our Airmen at the 139th AATTC are tasked with training our partners on the latest model aircraft, which they have not yet had the opportunity to use. They only have the older C-130H model. The AATTC is at the forefront of our National Defense Strategy, however, despite an investment of over \$80 million in MILCON over the last 20 years, countless deployments both at home and abroad, its central U.S. location, and the fact that it is operating the oldest C-130H 2.5 models, the 139th Airlift Wing has been passed over once again in the Air National Guard's most recent J model beddown.

When our international partners arrive to train at the AATTC, 60-65% of them are using modern, J-model aircraft. In order to project confidence and maximize these invaluable training partnerships, the 139th Airlift Wing must have access to the most modern and capable air mobility platform. Secretary Kendall, As the Air Force and Air National Guard evaluate where to beddown the eight C-130Js that were congressionally added in the FY 24 budget, I strongly urge you to take into account the National Defense Strategy missions like the Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center and select the 139th Airlift Wing since your own most recent basing analysis indicates it is the logical next location. Thank you.

Secretary KENDALL. The 139th Airlift Wing provides a vital contribution to the National Defense Strategy. Congress appropriated eight C-130Js to the Department of the Air Force (DAF) in the FY24 Defense Appropriations Bill for the Air National Guard (ANG). These eight C-130Js will recapitalize eight C-130H aircraft at an ANG unit. I have delegated the decision authority for this basing action to the Director of the Air National Guard and I expect the 139th Airlift Wing will be a candidate location for this action.

Mr. GRAVES. To support operations in the Indo Pacific and enable Agile Combat Employment, there will be significant demands for innovative airlift and aerial refueling capabilities. I understand that through AFWERX, the Air Force is working with innovative companies on dual-use aircraft autonomy and remote piloting technologies for aircraft such as the KC-135 Stratotanker. However, funding for AFWERX Prime and its work to transition aircraft autonomy technologies was reduced to only \$6 million in the FY25 Air Force Budget Request.

With this significant reduction from FY24 levels, how does the Air Force plan to support the development of autonomous aerial refueling and airlift capabilities that will enable air power to be projected farther downrange?

Secretary KENDALL. The Department of the Air Force continues to analyze the potential roles for autonomy in future aerial refueling and airlift capabilities in envisioned warfighting scenarios through research investments and industry engagement. The Air Force has been working to explore approaches to continuing with the development and maturation of airlift and autonomy capabilities - most notably through a growing partnership with the Defense Innovation Unit, which has been a critical partner in ongoing electric vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) efforts and is now closely supporting additional work on autonomous VTOL logistics. In addition to the AFWERX Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer and Prime efforts, the Air Force is investing in science and technology to investigate the utility of autonomous aerial refueling in GPS and communications degraded environments and the ability for autonomous capabilities to reduce aircrew workload, providing an opportunity for additional mission capacity and ability to project air power further downrange.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KELLY

Mr. KELLY. Secretary Kendall, according to the Congressionally mandated "America's Strategic Posture" review from October 2023, "China is steadily progressing toward its goal of becoming a worldclass leader in space with the intent to match or surpass the United States by 2045." Additionally, this report quotes the previous Commander of U.S. Space Command stating "China and Russia consider [our] dependency [on space to be] a soft underbelly and seek to exploit it. They in-

tend to limit our access to space during crisis and conflict, and they are fielding capabilities to that effect.”

As you know, the FY25 President’s Budget forecasts \$18 billion for 68 launches over the next five years; this program ensures assured access to the space domain for DOD’s and NRO’s most important payloads. Mr. Secretary, how does FY25 NSSL budget continue to ensure our persistent assured access to space in all phases of conflict? Can you explain why it is critical to have three major launch providers in Phase 3, especially our adversaries target and seek to exploit our “soft underbelly” in space?

Secretary KENDALL. The FY25 National Security Space Launch (NSSL) budget is critical to maintaining assured access to space and delivering capabilities to orbit when needed. With the growing launch demand and several emerging launch providers, we designed the NSSL Phase 3 strategy to pursue a dual-lane hybrid contracting approach to assure persistent space access for our more technically demanding and less risk-tolerant mission sets and increase access to commercial launch partners. NSSL Phase 3 Lane 1 provides resiliency through the diversity of launch providers and systems. Lane 2 provides assured access to space, with full mission assurance, for our highest energy and most complex mission sets. Adding a third provider in Lane 2, if affordable, would increase resiliency and launch capacity, incentivizes competition, and ensures at least three entirely NSSL-certified launch service providers by 2030. The FY25 budget request that includes \$18 billion across the future years defense program for NSSL is our best estimate to procure the NSSL currently planned over that time. We will have more pricing insight once Phase 3 contracts award.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

Mr. WALTZ. A web of factors that include commercial airline hiring, military flight instructor shortages, changes in the U.S. war footing abroad, and the Air Force’s shrinking fleet has entangled the service into a long-running pilot shortfall that makes the service more vulnerable in a potential crisis. The service has nibbled at the edges of a 2,000-pilot shortage for years.

Each year, it hopes to employ about 13,000 active duty pilots overall, plus another 8,000 or so in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. On the active duty side, the Air Force wants 741 more people to meet its goal of about 13,000 pilots. That means about 6% of active duty pilot slots sit empty and most of those job openings are in the fighter community. The Guard and Reserve have an even wider gap, which has held steady at about 1,200 airmen across the two components. About 15% of Guard and Reserve pilot jobs are vacant.

The USAF closed out fiscal 2022 with about 200 more active duty pilots than it had three years earlier. Now, though, military officials and civilian experts alike argue the Pentagon needs to amass a more robust pilot corps to prepare for the next conflict. In 2023, the USAF launched a congressionally mandated initiative to keep more “rated” officers - manned and unmanned aircraft pilots, combat systems officers and air battle managers with incentives for stationing, \$50k bonus (up from \$35k), in line with a RAND Corps. Recommendation.

How is the current pilot shortage? Did the new mandate for more “rated” officers help stop the bleeding?

General ALLVIN. We only measure the shortage at the end of the FY for consistency. As of 30 September 2023, the pilot shortage is 1,102 active-duty, 239 Reserve, and 507 Guard pilots for a total shortage of 1,848. The congressionally mandated Demo program and Legacy Aviation bonus contracted 291 manned pilots in FY23 and 232 in FY24, with approximately 4 months left in the program. An additional 164 pilots have contracted two years early under the Demo program and an additional 84 pilots have contracted three years early under the Demo program. The FY23 program was only open from 15 August to 15 September. Given last year’s one-month eligibility window, FY23 results do not directly correlate to this year’s ten-month program. However, every pilot we retain in the Total Force mitigates the shortage, and with four months remaining, we have contracted 80% of last year’s total, which is statistically promising. The data from the full-length FY24 program will establish the baseline for measuring the program’s success and inform us of any future changes to increase rated officer retention. As we wait for the final FY24 data, due by the end of the calendar year, the program has proven successful in increasing predictability and some certainty regarding retention numbers.

Mr. WALTZ. DoD has added personnel to tackle the backlog of medical paperwork spurred by the new Genesis electronic health records system. Genesis has often flagged old prescriptions and incidents that wouldn’t hinder a recruit’s ability to do their job. But weeding out the truly challenging cases takes time. BGEN Chris-

topher Amrhein, the head of the Air Force Recruiting Service, reported nearly 9,000 prospective Air Force and Space Force recruits dropped out of consideration because of the time it took to process their medical records. Furthermore, in February, at the Air and Space Forces Association's Air Warfare Symposium, General Amrhein stated "If you do the math ... you're somewhere in the ballpark of 5,600 folks that we could have likely brought in if we had a little bit more accelerated medical processing." This comes as the Air Force was 1,907 pilots short of its 21,000-person goal for manned aircraft as of October. Why has the Air Force been disproportionately affected by problems with the Genesis system?

Secretary KENDALL. Military Health System (MHS) Genesis is essential in identifying and exposing previously undisclosed medical conditions. Its implementation has increased recruitment quality, decreased post-entry medical issues, and resulted in substantial cost avoidance to the DoD. However, this increased fidelity in applicant health information has come at a price, as initial medical qualification rates declined from 80% (pre-MHS Genesis) to 58% in FY23.

The issues driven by this new system are not unique to the Air Force. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is working closely with the DoD and the other Services to address many of the issues coinciding with the implementation of MHS Genesis.

The DAF has committed additional resources as well as developed and revised processes to stem the number of applicants leaving the enlistment process while awaiting adjudication of their medical qualifications, including instituting a conditional Delayed Entry Program (DEP) allowing applicants with medical issues having a high degree of waiver approval to join the DEP. It has reduced applicant attrition and kept them engaged in their medical processing. Overall, waiver decisions have reduced from 40 days in November 2022 to four days, reducing the awaiting decision queue from 1,800 to 350 cases.

Mr. WALTZ. Air Force JROTC not only promotes civic participation amongst young people, but also a way to address our military recruitment shortfalls. According to the Air Force, approximately 22% of students graduating high school with AFJROTC experience choose to pursue active-duty Air Force service. However, in the FY25 budget request, Air Force JROTC is being cut by \$1 million. The Air Force is the only branch that sees their JROTC budget cut this year. Last year, Congress raised the cap on the number of programs authorized. It's the clear intent of Congress we should have more programs, not less. This morning, we received a reply to a January letter Rep. Houlihan and I sent you, asking you to reconsider the closure of some programs. I'd like to thank you for putting 4 out of 5 of these programs on probationary status for an additional year. However, of the Air Force's 841 JROTC units, 193 (23%) are on probation.

Why is there such a high number of AF JROTC programs on probation? Why is the Air Force cutting funding for their program?

Secretary KENDALL. Although the FY25 President's Budget request of \$74.7 million is slightly lower than the FY24 request of \$75.7 million, the delta was due to a Department of the Air Force (DAF) budget leveling impacting civilian positions.

However, the DAF fully intends to fund Air Force JROTC at previous FY24 levels. Regarding the number of units on probation, each Air Force JROTC unit must meet minimum cadet enrollment requirements as required by 10 United States Code Section 203-100 cadets or 10% of the school enrollment, whichever is lower. When a JROTC unit fails to meet the requirement, they are notified and placed on probation to allow the school to increase enrollment. We are very interested in continuing to work with Congress to reimagine JROTC and ensure that this character-building leadership and citizenship program continues to contribute to the long-term success of our Service and nation.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. STRICKLAND

Mrs. STRICKLAND. We have heard from senior military officials that there are not enough tankers to support a near peer threat in the Indo-Pacific region. The Washington National Guard has had a formal strategic partnership with Thailand and Malaysia for 22 and 7 years respectively. These relationships are incredibly important to our national defense strategy as well as regional stability. The 141 ARW can show that when they are responsible for the maintenance of aircraft, their experienced maintainers are able to outperform on all meaningful metrics. Yet, in my state the 141st Air Refueling Wing, must borrow planes from the 92nd for strategically important missions such as the state partnership program, Noble Eagle or homeland defense alert missions and domestic response missions.

We have heard that an analysis showed a potential \$500 million savings by converting the 141 ARW from a Classic to an Active association model. We have also

heard that officially transferring 8 BAI from the 92 ARW to the 141 ARW for PAI would increase the availability of aircraft for the refueling enterprise. Can you please share your perspective on each of these issues?

General ALLVIN. Air refueling is critical to deliver a decisive advantage. As an Indo-Pacific Command-facing location, Fairchild Air Force Base is a critical air mobility installation and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The 92nd Air Refueling Wing (ARW) shares use of its 48 assigned primary mission aircraft inventory KC-135s with the 141st ARW Classic Associate Wing co-located at Fairchild. The presumed goal in transitioning the 141st Air Refueling Wing to the Active component would be providing its own unit-equipped (UE) KC-135 aircraft. Implementing this request would prevent the Air Force from investing in higher-priority modernization needs, such as the Next Generation Air Refueling System, which is required to meet the Department of Defense's pacing challenge. In April 2023, the Air Force delivered a briefing to Congress in response to Section 155 of the FY23 National Defense Authorization Act, outlining our assessment that outfitting the 141st ARW with UE aircraft would divert critical funding away from higher-priority modernization needs required to meet our pacing challenge while providing minimal capability and capacity gains.

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RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GIMENEZ

Mr. GIMENEZ. Given the strategic significance of Homestead Air Reserve Base and its location as the southern-most strategic air base in the continental US, will you maintain a fighter mission at the base through the fighter force restructure?

General ALLVIN. The Department of the Air Force has no force structure changes in FY25 for Homestead and no plans to close Homestead Air Reserve Base (ARB). Homestead ARB will continue to be considered as a candidate in future strategic basing actions as applicable based on specific mission requirements.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Do you believe that the Department should accept FAA approvals for commercial derivative aircraft parts if they meet all standards and are proven to be safe?

General ALLVIN. Yes, we do this currently. The Air Force only conducts military certification above and beyond the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification if there are portions that are not FAA certified or that are military specific (e.g., we have higher requirements for things like electromagnetic interference hardening that are mission-oriented). We use FAA approvals if the FAA has certified a part and use it consistently with that certification. If the entire system is not cer-

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RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. FINSTAD

Mr. FINSTAD. As the Department moves forward with the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program, how is the Department engaging with and supporting the industrial base to ensure there are adequate capabilities and capacity to support CCA production, particularly as it relates to engines and propulsion systems?

Secretary KENDALL. Speed-to-ramp is a high priority for the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) has and continues to work closely with industry to jointly assess supplier ability to deliver all parts and subsystems required to manufacture and deliver CCA on time. It includes propulsion systems, with no engine designed or modified specifically for CCA application. In September 2023, the DAF released a request for information for a new CCA-class engine with performance between 3,000-8,000 lb. thrust, and it is keenly interested to see what the industry could provide.

Mr. FINSTAD. Guaranteed space access is imperative for our national security; how does the Department intend to expand the use of technologies, such as high altitude LiDAR atmospheric measuring systems, to improve launch operations and availability?

General SALTZMAN. Real-time weather data at our launch facilities is critical to provide accurate risk assessments and avoid unnecessary and costly launch scrubs. The partnership between Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) and Honeywell Aerospace enabled initial demonstrations of Honeywell's High Altitude LiDAR Atmospheric Sensing (HALAS) system at SpaceX launch facilities. Space Force's investment in this partnership in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) was \$230,000 for the demonstrator. However, AFRL has not identified any funding past FY24 because the technology has matured. As the remainder of the year-long demonstration progresses, the Department is considering opportunities to transition HALAS technology to commercial launch providers and various launch sites.

For example, AFRL has been working with Honeywell and SpaceX to demonstrate this technology and transition it to use at Space Launch Delta 30 in 2025.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. DAVIS

Mr. DAVIS. What conversations/communication have Air Force personnel (political and military appointees) had with personnel stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and the local Wayne County community surrounding the base to understand the community impact of divesting fighter squadrons at the base?

Secretary KENDALL. The DAF will notify affected base personnel at the appropriate time, and the base will be in frequent contact with the local community to make them aware of any impacts. Seymour-Johnson AFB will remain a vital component of our Air Force as home to the F-15E/EX Formal Training Units. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is committed to continuation of the 4th Fighter Wing and its ability to produce and project agile combat airpower. While the introduction of approximately 500 military positions would decrease the active-duty presence at Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base (AFB) to just under 5,000 active-duty Airmen, the change is necessary to ensure we remain competitive with pacing challenges. Local

base leaders introduced the inactivation during two scheduled engagements in February and May of 2024.

Divestment was also discussed at several other engagements including an office call with the Mayor of Goldsboro, Goldsboro's City Manager, and Rep. Bell on 1 March; a Friends of Seymour Oyster Roast on 27 March; a Community Sync meeting on 7 May; and another meeting with the Goldsboro Mayor on 23 May. Additionally, the Governor of North Carolina is scheduled to visit on 29 August and has expressed his desire to discuss divestment. As this squadron inactivation is addressed through the corporate Strategic Basing process, additional stakeholders from the headquarters will engage national leaders, to include congressional delegations, on this important adjustment.

The DAF will notify affected base personnel at the appropriate time, and the base will be in frequent contact with the local community to make them aware of any impacts. Seymour-Johnson AFB will remain a vital component of our Air Force as home to the F-15E/EX Formal Training Units.

Mr. DAVIS. Does the Air Force have a plan to recapitalize the E fleet and procure enough F-15Ex aircraft to prevent the elimination of fighter squadrons at bases like Seymour Johnson?

Secretary KENDALL. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is acquiring a limited number of F-15EX to recapitalize a portion of the F-15C/D fleet.

Mr. DAVIS. Will the Air Force commit to putting at least one military construction project for Seymour Johnson (i.e. the Child Development Center) other than the arms range on the unfunded priorities list or future years defense priority in Fiscal Year 2026?

Secretary KENDALL. The DAF will submit a Child Development Center (CDC) project at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base for consideration in the FY26-30 Fiscal Year Defense Program. The \$42 million project reached the 35% design stage and will construct a large-sized CDC that includes 19 activity rooms, kitchen, laundry, administration, and four outdoor fenced play areas. If funded, it will replace the 47-year-old facility.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SEWELL

Ms. SEWELL. The 117th Refueling Wing has a long, rich history dating back to World War I. Since 2021, the wing has been deployed to Romania, as well as areas in CENTCOM and INDOPACOM. The 117th is a fixture to our Air Force's readiness. As we help our allies in Europe combat Russia's unprovoked war on Ukraine, and as we see increasing tensions in the Middle East, can you discuss the significance the Southeast region has in our air refueling capabilities, specifically Alabama's 117th Refueling Wing?

General ALLVIN. The 117th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) remains heavily engaged and deployed at the highest rates in unit history in support of global contingency operations and its 24/7 support of the nuclear enterprise. The FY25 President's Budget contains no line items specific to the 117th ARW. However, the wing is resourced from the Air National Guard's 143,000-hour flying hour program with weapon system sustainment funding at 86.8% of the project requirement. The 117th ARW is among 15 Air National Guard units under consideration for KC-46 Recap in Main Operating Base (MOB) 7.

There have been no MOB 7 decisions to date. They are expected in the 4th quarter of FY24.

Ms. SEWELL. The President's fiscal year 2025 budget request directed a cut in the production of MH-139 aircraft, which will impact the FY24-approved planned delivery of 10 MH-139 aircraft to the 908th Airlift Wing, based at Maxwell. It's incredibly important that we ensure the on-time delivery of the 8 remaining MH-139 aircraft to the 908th to keep pace with operational readiness. How will the Air Force ensure the on-time delivery of these aircraft to the 908th?

Secretary KENDALL. The FY25 President's Budget (PB) will not affect the Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB) delivery of MH-139s. One aircraft was delivered in April 2024 and the second will be delivered in September 2024. The two helicopters were test aircraft and will be reconfigured to support Maxwell AFB. The final six aircraft from the enacted FY23 PB (Lot #1) are set to deliver in FY25.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LALOTA

Mr. LALOTA. During recent Congressional testimony before the Armed Services Committee, Lieutenant General Michael Schmidt, overseeing the F-35 Program, testified that the testing of new software in labs before flight trials is a significant bottleneck, leading to unforeseen challenges and delays. I suspect this issue isn't exclusive to the F-35 but prevalent across various weapon systems, illustrating a gap be-

tween our rapid software development pace and testing capabilities, ultimately hindering timely capability delivery to our forces. In an era focused on innovation, it's critical we resolve this. What strategies can be implemented to enhance DOD software integration labs' capacity and efficiency? Additionally, considering the costs of acquiring necessary physical hardware, how feasible is the development of a virtual test environment to supplement our current capabilities and meet the DOD's growing needs?

General ALLVIN. Test efficiency and capability, particularly for software and software integration, can be improved via virtual and physical test environments when the program strategy is built upon a combined Industry and USG adherence to Government Reference Architectures and an appropriate risk-sharing partnership. The strategy includes:

Government-defined architectures and standards incentivize the industry to co-develop compliant hardware and software. It prevents vendor lock, enables system-of-systems integration, extends access across the defense industrial base and other non-traditional vendors, and enables rapid fielding of software-defined capabilities with platform-agnostic scaling.

Transparent partnership and competition from concept refinement thru development and test. This provides technology on-and-off ramps to expand competition across multiple vendor pools and increments to incentivize contractor performance, increase industrial capacity, and preserve government options.

It is on an integrated digital environment that leverages enterprise digital tools for software development, automated testing, and modeling. This environment also leverages a common DevSecOps environment for collaboration and rapid insertion of third-party software upgrades to outpace the threat. Following the above, we maximize the conditions for the DoD to leverage the Industry and DoD's software test efficiency. A digital environment provides the opportunity to buy down the risk of the required virtual test environment to make the as-built hardware test system more efficient.

Mr. LaLOTA. The FY25 budget proposes significant reductions in our F-35 and F-15EX programs, along with the divestment of over 100 aircraft in Air Force inventory. This shift impacts not only our military capabilities, but also the livelihoods of over 535 Long Islanders employed through F-35 component supplies. Can you explain how these cuts align with maintaining a robust industrial base, especially considering the fluctuating procurement strategies?

General ALLVIN. Lockheed Martin is producing F-35 aircraft at near-maximum capacity for DoD and foreign military sales customers, so impacts on the industrial base and component suppliers will be marginal.

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RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. ALFORD

Mr. ALFORD. The head of Strategic Command, General Cotton, recently said during testimony that he would "love more than" 100 B-21s and to field B-21s more quickly. If DoD decides to field B-21s more quickly, is the Air Force and the Industry team positioned to support a steeper production ramp?

General ALLVIN. Not at this time, however, we are looking into options that would make this possible. While the B-21 program baseline includes planned production of a minimum of 100 aircraft, we continue to work with Strategic Command, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and our industry partners to examine what planning and resources would be needed should the Department decide to increase the B-21 production rate. In managing the B-21 program and overseeing the broader nuclear portfolio within DoD, we regularly assess the timing and delivery of nuclear capabilities to the warfighter to ensure we balance operational capability with development and production risk.

Mr. ALFORD. I'm focused on what we can field in the next 24 months that can continue to shift the balance of power in our favor over the CCP. Can each of you talk about what fielding GBU-62 JDAMs for the B-2 bomber would do for our Air Force's ability to project power and strike targets?

General ALLVIN. The Air Force has conducted multiple studies and analyses on mid-range weapons across the enterprise, and the Guided Bomb Unit-62 Joint Direct Attack Munition Extended Range (GBU-62-JDAM ER) has been one of several considerations in the past few years. This capability would provide an additional standoff range for our direct attack portfolio, thereby increasing platform survivability in some scenarios of interest. While the Air Force does not have a program of record for this capability, GBU-62-JDAM ER is currently in low-rate production in support of partner initiatives. We believe aircraft integration on existing Air Force platforms is possible but requires integration, engineering, and test considerations. The initial cost estimates for implementing a new program of record are approximately \$150 million in additional funding and does not displace other weapons integration efforts and priorities. As we posture today's arsenal and develop weapons for tomorrow's threats, we will continue to assess the GBU-62-JDAM ER and its added value to our capabilities.

Mr. ALFORD. I'm concerned about our fighter capacity. The Air Force is buying 46 less aircraft than planned. I understand the F-15EX program of record has shrunk from originally 144 fighters down to 98. I'm concerned this is impacting the Air Force's ability to replace Guard and Reserve units such as A-10s and other legacy aircraft. Can both of you talk about the fighter capacity we won't have as originally planned?

General ALLVIN. The F-15EX is a short-duration procurement to rapidly recapitalize the F-15C/D airframe for the air superiority and homeland defense mission. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is accepting measured near-term risk through inactivation or re-missioning of fighter units, with no expectation of being able to recapitalize legacy platforms one-for-one as some platforms are divested. The fiscally constrained environment driven by the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act and reduced buying power necessitated difficult decisions, and we are seeing the impacts of that in the FY25 President's Budget. The DAF believes the FY25 budget represents the best option for spreading that risk over time.

Mr. ALFORD. Considering the current status of the B-2 and the transition to the B-21, can you talk about the modernization efforts being made to the B-2? Are we making the necessary investments, such as in ACS, to keep the B-2 lethal and capable until the B-21 is operational and fielded in sufficient numbers?

General ALLVIN. The B-2 modifications provided in the FY25 President's Budget (PB) address the most significant capability gaps and supportability needs of the B-2 fleet while balancing the fiscal responsibility necessary to transition to the B-21. The FY25 PB requests \$44.1 million for Advanced Communications Suite, which remains the highest B-2 investment priority of Air Force Global Strike Command, providing secure communications that maintain joint situational awareness for the B-2. The FY25 PB also requests \$13million for the Low Observable Signature and Supportability Modifications program to continue to improve the stealth aspects of the B-2 to keep pace with developing threats. To improve B-2 aircraft availability, the FY25 PB requests \$17.6 million for B-2 Display modernization, which addresses the #1 driver of mission-impaired capability awaiting parts.

Mr. ALFORD. General Allvin, I'm sure you understand the grave threat that ubiquitous technical surveillance poses to the Air Force's ability to project global airpower. What strategy is the DAF pursuing to counter China's ability to use service member personal cell phone networks to degrade the Air Force's capability to conduct rapid global combat and logistic operations that require enhanced operational security measures, such as tanker units from Air Mobility Command supporting Global Strike Command missions?

General ALLVIN. The Air Force Operational Security (OPSEC) program sees Ubiquitous Technical Surveillance (UTS) as a significant issue facing the Air Force. We implemented numerous measures and countermeasures at the individual program, project, and activity levels to reduce the risk of UTS to specific programs and missions. Additional efforts are ongoing to identify programmatic adjustments needed to address Service-wide gaps in OPSEC training, education, assessments, and operational execution. For example, the Air Force Information Warfare Implementation Plan includes a line of effort focused on OPSEC training and educating Airmen about foreign intelligence collection risks, specifically in a deployed environment. There is also a line of effort to generate a gap analysis of Signature Managers' capabilities and effectiveness at all Wings/ Field Operating Agencies, which will assist with cell phones and other inadvertent signatures.

Mr. ALFORD. The head of Strategic Command, General Cotton, recently said during testimony that he would "love more than" 100 B-21s and to field B-21s more quickly. If DoD decides to field B-21s more quickly, is the Air Force and the Industry team positioned to support a steeper production ramp?

Secretary KENDALL. Not at this time, however, we are looking into options that would make this possible. While the B-21 program baseline includes planned production of a minimum of 100 aircraft, we continue to work with Strategic Command, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and our industry partners to examine what planning and resources would be needed should the Department decide to increase the B-21 production rate. In managing the B-21 program and overseeing the broader nuclear portfolio within DoD, we regularly assess the timing and delivery of nuclear capabilities to the warfighter to ensure we balance operational capability with development and production risk.

Mr. ALFORD. I'm focused on what we can field in the next 24 months that can continue to shift the balance of power in our favor over the CCP. Can each of you talk about what fielding GBU-62 JDAMs for the B-2 bomber would do for our Air Force's ability to project power and strike targets?

Secretary KENDALL. The Air Force has conducted multiple studies and analyses on mid-range weapons across the enterprise, and the Guided Bomb Unit-62 Joint Direct Attack Munition Extended Range (GBU-62-JDAM ER) has been one of several considerations in the past few years. This capability would provide an additional standoff range for our direct attack portfolio, thereby increasing platform survivability in some scenarios of interest. While the Air Force does not have a program of record for this capability, GBU-62-JDAM ER is currently in low-rate production in support of partner initiatives. We believe aircraft integration on existing Air Force platforms is possible but requires integration, engineering, and test considerations. The initial cost estimates for implementing a new program of record are approximately \$150 million in additional funding and does not displace other weapons integration efforts and priorities. As we posture today's arsenal and develop weapons for tomorrow's threats, we will continue to assess the GBU-62-JDAM ER and its added value to our capabilities.

Mr. ALFORD. I'm concerned about our fighter capacity. The Air Force is buying 46 less aircraft than planned. I understand the F-15EX program of record has shrunk from originally 144 fighters down to 98. I'm concerned this is impacting the Air Force's ability to replace Guard and Reserve units such as A-10s and other legacy aircraft. Can both of you talk about the fighter capacity we won't have as originally planned?

Secretary KENDALL. The F-15EX is a short-duration procurement to rapidly recapitalize the F-15C/D airframe for the air superiority and homeland defense mission. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is accepting measured near-term risk through inactivation or re-missioning of fighter units, with no expectation of being able to recapitalize legacy platforms one-for-one as some platforms are divested. The fiscally constrained environment driven by the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act and reduced buying power necessitated difficult decisions, and we are seeing the impacts of that in the FY25 President's Budget. The DAF believes the FY25 budget represents the best option for spreading that risk over time.

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