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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: Status of Air Force Nuclear and Strategic Systems

STATEMENT OF: Lieutenant General James M. Kowalski, Commander
Air Force Global Strike Command

April 17, 2013

Introduction

Chairman Udall, Ranking Member Sessions, and distinguished Members of the Committee; thank you for allowing me to represent nearly 25,000 Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) Airmen and civilians and to appear before you for the third time as their Commander. I will use this opportunity to update you on our mission, the status of our forces, and the challenges we will face over the next few years.

Air Force Global Strike Command Mission

Since the standup of Air Force Global Strike Command in 2009, our mission has been to: "Develop and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations -- Safe, Secure and Effective -- to support the President of the United States and Combatant Commanders."

AFGSC Nuclear Mission

At the core of our mission statement are three reinforcing attributes: "Safe – Secure – Effective." These were outlined in President Obama's 2009 Prague speech where he said: "Make no mistake: as long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies." The attributes of "safe, secure, effective" serve as the foundation of every nuclear-related activity in AFGSC, from the discipline shown in the smallest task, to how we prioritize our planning and programming for the Future Years Defense Program. The effects of our nuclear force, as outlined in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, are to ensure strategic stability, to support the regional deterrence architecture, and to assure our allies and partners.

AFGSC Conventional Mission

Our conventional bomber forces defend our national interests by deterring, or should deterrence fail, defeating an adversary. Two capabilities are fundamental to the success of our bomber force: first is our ability to hold heavily defended targets at risk, and second is our ability to apply relentless and persistent combat power across the spectrum of conflict. The U.S. force of penetrating and stand-off heavy bombers, with their capacity for long-range and long-

endurance while carrying large and varied payloads, are well-matched to our Nation's global responsibilities and are in high demand by the regional Combatant Commanders.

Air Force Global Strike Command Forces

The two Numbered Air Forces under AFGSC, Eighth Air Force and Twentieth Air Force, have a storied history back to the Army Air Corps. Eighth Air Force operations in Europe during World War II paved the way for victory over Nazi Germany. Twentieth Air Force ended the war in the Pacific by dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, these organizations continue to serve critical national security roles as Component Numbered Air Forces for USSTRATCOM and as Task Forces for on-alert nuclear forces.

Twentieth Air Force

Twentieth Air Force commands the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) fleet and our UH-1N helicopter force. Within the Triad, our 450 dispersed and hardened missile silos provide the foundation for strategic stability with other major nuclear powers by presenting any potential adversary a near insurmountable obstacle should they consider an attack on the U.S. No adversary can credibly threaten an attack on this force without depleting their own arsenal.

Minuteman III

We continue to execute our long range plan of modernization and sustainment for the Minuteman III. This plan includes a new booster, Transporter Erector vehicle and reentry system Payload Transport vehicle.

The ICBM Cryptography Upgrade, Code System Media, and the Strategic Targeting and Application Computer System programs have been fully funded, providing for hardware and software upgrades to allow the secure transmission of critical codes and targeting data via modern media. These upgrades will reduce security risks and the number of man-hours needed for the annual cryptographic code change at our Launch Facilities and Launch Control Centers.

We are also upgrading ICBM Launch Control Centers with advanced extremely high frequency communications. This program provides connectivity with the National Command Authority. This past year we advanced the Minuteman Minimum Essential Emergency Communications Network Program, which upgrades and modernizes cryptographic devices and

enhances and secures the Emergency Action Message network. We began weapon system testing in April 2012 and fielding is scheduled to begin June 2013 in simulators before being installed in operational ICBM sites in February 2014.

In coordination with Air Force Materiel Command and the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, AFGSC resolved test range safety issues with ICBM flight test components to restore operational test launches after a 10-month delay. In 2012, the ICBM test community executed two operational test launches and multiple simulated and smaller scale tests. Operational testing is currently funded through FY15 with four operational test launches scheduled per year to satisfy test requirements outlined by USSTRATCOM and the National Nuclear Security Administration.

We continue to closely examine emerging needs including propulsion, guidance system upgrades and fuze refurbishment to ensure Minuteman III weapon system remains reliable and ready through 2030. We will transition these technologies to the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent.

Ground Based Strategic Deterrent

The Minuteman III, fielded in the 1970s with a planned service life of 10 years, has proven its value in deterrence well beyond the platform's intended lifespan. The Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) is the program intended to replace the Minuteman III and we will start the Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) this July. Initial capabilities were identified, validated by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, and approved in August 2012 by the Air Force Chief of Staff. The analysis is critical to inform near-term recapitalization programs so technologies and components can be leveraged into GBSD approaches. Completion of the GBSD AoA is projected for late FY14. Navy representatives are fully engaged with our GBSD team, investigating the benefits and risks of commonality, with the objective to reduce future design, development, and manufacturing costs for strategic systems.

UH-1N

AFGSC is the lead command for USAF UH-1N in support of two critical national missions: nuclear security for Air Force Global Strike Command and Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government taskings for the Air Force District of Washington.

Although the UH-1Ns are over 40-years old, we expect to fly them for at least another decade. We must sustain the helicopter's current capabilities and selectively modernize them to minimize existing capability gaps and avoid increased sustainment costs brought on by obsolescence. These efforts include installing crashworthy seats, making the cockpit fully night vision compatible, replacing obsolete sensors to better support our security mission and the National Search and Rescue Plan, and performing some delayed safety and sustainment improvements. We will continue to look, both inside the Air Force and across the Department of Defense, for ways to reduce risk with the current fleet and close our capability gap. Moreover, the UH-1N's deficiencies in range, speed, and payload can only be remedied through replacement with a new platform. Our way ahead for UH-1N replacement is the Common Support Helicopter program, which is currently unfunded.

Eighth Air Force

Eighth Air Force commands the B-2 Spirit and B-52H Stratofortress bomber forces and directs the bombers' conventional and nuclear operational readiness. The B-2 gives the United States the ability to attack heavily defended targets, while the B-52H serves as the premier high-altitude standoff bomber. Our dual-role bomber fleet is the most visible leg of the nuclear triad, allowing decision makers to demonstrate resolve through generation, dispersal or deployment.

B-52H

Our emphasis on 2012 as the "Year of the B-52" highlighted the bomber's storied 60-year operational history and the Airmen who have worked tirelessly to keep the aircraft flying. The B-52 is able to deliver the widest variety of standoff, direct attack, nuclear and conventional weapons in the Air Force, and remains a universally recognized symbol of American airpower.

AFGSC continues to pursue funding to complete the Combat Network Communications Technology (CONECT) upgrade. This upgrade resolves sustainability issues with aging cockpit displays and communications while also providing a "digital backbone" to take the B-52 past

2040 and allow integration into the complex battlespace of the future. CONECT replaces aging displays, adds a radio, provides beyond-line-of-sight communications and situational awareness, efficient machine-to-machine retargeting, and connectivity to the net-centric command and control environment. The CONECT program successfully passed Milestone C and stands ready for your continued support.

The B-52 gets additional combat capability through fielding of the Miniature Air Launched Decoy (MALD). The B-52 and F-16 are currently the only aircraft to use this decoy. Additionally, AFGSC is programming for an internal weapons bay modification which will increase payload by 66 percent for advanced precision weapons such as MALDs, Joint Direct Attack Munitions, and Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles.

We have a number of ongoing sustainment efforts underway, to include a replacement landing gear anti-skid controller, the upgraded Forward-Looking Infrared Sensor and a wiring replacement program.

Additionally, AFGSC continues to pursue a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal on the B-52 with the Service Life Extension Program for the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM). The intent is to extend the ALCM through 2030 until the Long Range Standoff Missile (LRSO) becomes operational.

Finally, we executed all FY12 scheduled Nuclear Weapons System Evaluation Program testing requirements by launching six B-52H ALCMs and executing nine B-2 gravity bomb missions with 100 percent reliability. Overall, the B-52's ALCM weapon system reliability increased by over 10 percent and it remains a strong and capable nuclear deterrent.

B-2

2013 kicks off our "Year of the B-2" to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the first B-2 delivery to the USAF. During this year, we will focus on the weapon system's sustainment, readiness, and especially the Airmen who keep this stealthy bomber flying.

In the FY14 budget, we advocated for full funding of the B-2 Defensive Management System upgrade. This avionics improvement enhances aircrew situational awareness and increases aircraft survivability in heavily defended airspace against modern 21st century integrated air defense systems.

We installed the B-2 Extremely High Frequency Increment 1 upgrade on the first two operational aircraft. This modification improves onboard computers and provides a fiber optic backbone enabling future programs. Operational testing of these aircraft was completed this year and we are nearing full nuclear certification of the modified systems. We are on track to complete installation on the remaining aircraft by 2016, four months ahead of schedule.

AFGSC continues to evolve B-2 conventional combat capability by fielding vital programs such as the Massive Ordinance Penetrator (MOP). Our Nation's ability to hold hardened, deeply buried targets at risk was bolstered by successful testing and fielding of the MOP, and this 30,000-pound weapon is now operational. This year we also tested a new B-2 low observable field modification which cuts maintenance by about 10,000 hours per year and we are on track to complete this installation three years ahead of schedule. Finally, we completed the $1.4 billion B-2 Radar Modernization Program, ensuring full compliance with the Federal Communications Commission mandates while maintaining the B-2's ability to navigate and target its weapons.

The B-2 enterprise strives to maintain the proper balance of fleet modernization efforts, test, aircrew training, and combat readiness. The dynamics of a small fleet continue to challenge our sustainment efforts primarily due to vanishing vendors and diminishing sources of supply. Air Force Materiel Command is working to ensure timely parts availability; however, many manufactures do not see a strong business case in supplying parts for a small aircraft fleet. Problems with a single part can have a significant readiness impact on a small fleet that lacks the flexibility of a large force to absorb parts shortages and logistics delays.

Fleet-wide Bomber Initiatives

We executed the command's 2012 $471 million flying-hour program resulting in 91 percent training currency for all assigned aircrews. One of our major command initiatives involved implementing a fleet-wide aviation fuel efficiency and tracking program. This provided guidance on a number of FY12 fuel conservation measures, resulting in a total of $7.8 million in fuel savings, far surpassing our original goal of $3 million. AFGSC also matured the bomber tasking process via Global Force Management.

Long Range Strike Bomber

The combat edge our innovative B-2 provides will be challenged by next generation air defenses and the proliferation of these advanced systems. The Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B) program works to extend American air dominance against advanced air defense environments. We continue to work with Air Combat Command to develop the LRS-B and field a fleet of 100 new dual-capable bombers beginning in the mid-2020s.

Long Range Standoff Missile

In a similar manner to LRS-B, the LRSO aids in our mission to assure and deter. The LRSO will be the follow-on to the aging ALCM and will be compatible with the B-52, B-2 and LRS-B. The Analysis of Alternatives is complete and undergoing staffing through the joint community. We have worked closely with the LRSO Program Office to develop an acquisition strategy aligned with the Department of Energy's process for selecting and adapting an existing warhead.

B-61

The B61-12 program will extend the life of the B-61 and, with the B61-12 Tailkit Assembly program, will give us a safe, secure, and effective nuclear bomb for our dual-capable bombers and fighters. The Tailkit program vendor selection has been accomplished and the program is entering into Engineering and Manufacturing Development. This joint AFGSC/Department of Energy endeavor will allow us to continue to meet our strategic requirements and regional commitments.

Security

Nuclear surety and security are at the forefront of the command's mission. To keep our focus on these challenges, we developed a Strategic Security Plan (SSP) as an integrated road map for our security initiatives. The SSP will improve our nuclear security by incorporating lessons learned from other government agencies and recent overseas contingency operations.

A major AFGSC initiative is designing new Weapon Storage Facilities to consolidate nuclear maintenance, inspection, and storage. These will replace deficient and worn buildings in our aging weapon storage areas with a single modern and secure facility. This initiative eliminates security, design, and safety deficiencies and improves our maintenance processes.

Following partial design, the project will undergo validation by external agencies to include the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, Air Force Safety Center, and Air Force Security Center. We are also seeking Department of Energy and US Navy input to explore ways to standardize across all organizations. Final design completion is scheduled for March 2014. Our goal is to begin to include the MILCON for these new weapon storage facilities in FY15.

The Air Force's toughest inspection schedule continues to assess compliance and combat readiness in both our nuclear and conventional missions. Last year, we reported on our initiative to consolidate inspections to free up more training time for our Airmen and units. We implemented the first round of Consolidated Unit Inspections in 2012, bringing evaluators from multiple AF agencies into a single inspection. Additionally, we reduced overlap between the Nuclear Surety Inspections and Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspections without compromising individual inspection requirements. Combined, these initiatives returned an average of 132 operational training days per 3-year inspection cycle to each of our six wings while maintaining the high standards demanded of nuclear operations.

We continue our efforts to improve and strengthen the nuclear enterprise through our long-range planning efforts. AFGSC initiated an enterprise-wide campaign to develop a 20-year comprehensive investment strategy for the Air Force's Nuclear Deterrence Operations core function. We will use this plan to bolster our ability to provide the President and Combatant Commanders vital global strike warfighting capabilities by prioritizing modernization, sustainment, and acquisition efforts for our bomber, ICBM, and helicopter weapon systems and the nuclear command, control, and communications systems that underpin them all.

Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3)

Assured NC3 connectivity is the linchpin to a credible and secure strategic deterrent. As the Air Force Nuclear Command and Control System Chief Architect, the AFGSC Director of Communications is leading the Air Force prioritization and investment in survivable NC3. Within AFGSC, these systems include the Family of Advanced Beyond-line-of-sight Terminals, the Common Very Low Frequency Receiver, and upgrades to our wing command posts, Mobile Support Teams, and ICBM Launch Control Centers.

2013 Focus Areas

Always Better. The special trust and responsibility we have for nuclear weapons demands a culture where we must always seek to be better. Although we will continue to be challenged with sustaining aging weapon systems, we will leverage the innovation of our Airmen to get the most out of our resources.

Win the Fight. Whether that fight is in overseas contingencies where we have 1,100 Airmen deployed, or with our nuclear deterrent forces on alert today and every day, we will push to keep both our nuclear and conventional forces as combat ready as possible.

Care for Our Team. We will improve the quality of life for our Airmen and their families, aware of the unique demands of our mission and our locations. We will continue to foster resiliency and strength within a wingman culture, and we will aggressively educate and train our people with regard to the problem of sexual assault. Furthermore, we will continue to build a culture around our command value of "Respect for the worth and dignity of every Airman."

Modernize. We will stay focused on our weapon system modernization initiatives. Our MMIII has to be sustained to 2030 and we will advocate for a follow-on based on our GBSD work. The B-52H will take us past 2040 as the stand-off platform of choice, with a robust payload, unsurpassed range, and the greatest variety of munitions in the inventory. The B-2 will be our strategic penetrating platform denying safe haven to any adversary. The Long Range Strike Bomber will make sure we can continue to hold the global target set at risk. As our Air Launched Cruise Missile becomes obsolete and unsupportable, we will field a credible and flexible nuclear deterrent with the stealthy Long Range Stand-Off missile and consider conventional variants.

Conclusion

Thank you for your continued support of Air Force Global Strike Command. Our enduring challenges in AFGSC are: First, to instill a culture where every Airman understands the special trust and responsibility of nuclear weapons. Second, to maintain excellence in our conventional forces. Third, to sustain the current force while modernizing for the future.

Fiscal constraints, while posing planning challenges, do not alter the national security landscape or the intent of competitors and adversaries. Nor do they diminish the enduring value of long range, "strategic" forces to our Nation. Although we have less than one percent of the DoD budget, AFGSC nuclear forces help provide the ultimate guarantee of national sovereignty and AFGSC conventional forces provide joint commanders rapid global combat airpower.

It is my distinct privilege to lead this elite team and we assure you and this committee that Air Force Global Strike Command, working with our Joint partners, will meet these challenges and provide our Nation with ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations -- *safe, secure, and effective.*