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SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: FY27 Posture for Department of War Nuclear Forces
STATEMENT OF: General Stephen L. Davis, Commander
Air Force Global Strike Command

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INTRODUCTION

Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) provides decisive, long-range strike capabilities to the joint force anytime, anywhere. Our mission is clear: to sustain our current forces while simultaneously fielding the next generation of strategic weapon systems. To meet this immense responsibility, our efforts are focused through three strategic priorities: ensuring the absolute readiness of our forces today, driving the critical modernization of our capabilities for tomorrow, and building the global strike team.

This coming August will mark our 17th anniversary, a testament to our vital role. However, while the command is young, our weapon systems are not. The B-52H platform has been operational for 64 years, the B-2A for 32, and the B-1B for 40. The Minuteman III missile has been on alert for 55 years. The Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) systems the President relies upon are built on Cold War-era architecture. We have reached a watershed moment: there is no remaining margin in our legacy forces, yet the demand for these capabilities has never been higher, driven by the rapid modernization and diversification of our competitors' nuclear arsenals.

Our unwavering commitment to global readiness is demonstrated through a series of decisive military actions and a heightened operational tempo. In the past year, the United States has executed critical missions such as Operation EPIC FURY and Operation MIDNIGHT HAMMER against Iranian nuclear sites, Operation SOUTHERN SPEAR to combat Caribbean narcotics trafficking, and the comprehensive joint offensive Operation ABSOLUTE RESOLVE in Venezuela. This relentless engagement is powerfully demonstrated by the Air Force Global Strike Command, which has executed more Bomber Task Force (BTF) missions in the last year than in the past decade, with 496 days of

deployed operations spread throughout that period, showcasing American airpower and giving our adversaries pause. These dynamic and unpredictable deployments demonstrate the global reach of American airpower and reassure our allies of our steadfast resolve. This incredible operational tempo, coupled with the 63 years of unyielding 24/7 vigilance provided by our Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force, demonstrates the capability of our forces. However, sustaining this readiness is a monumental challenge.

Simultaneously, we are executing a once-in-a-generation modernization effort. We are at a critical inflection point, balancing the sustainment of aging systems against the urgent need to fund their replacements, such as the B-21 Raider, the LGM-35A Sentinel, the E-4C Survivable Air Operations Center (SAOC) and extensive upgrades such as the Commercial Engine Replacement Program and the Radar Modernization Program which will result in the B-52J. Success requires a delicate balance, ensuring the systems we rely on today remain viable even as we forge the force of the future.

Two of these systems, Sentinel and the B-21 are deemed so important to the future of American global security the President created a new position of Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager (DRPM) reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary of War. This streamlined process gives unprecedented access to the highest levels of the Department of War (DoW) and will ensure the responsiveness required to field these systems with the speed, quality, and capability required. This unprecedented approach will help ensure we deliver these critical 21st century nuclear capabilities.

Underpinning all of this is our priority of strengthening the Air Force Global Strike team. We are empowering our Airmen with the training and tools they need to strengthen our integrated operations. In order to meet the increasing demand signal from combatant

commanders, our people and partnerships are essential, highlighting our role in our global security.

AFGSC provides the backbone of our national defense and is critical to achieving two key imperatives of the National Defense Strategy: (1) defending the U.S. homeland, and (2) deterring China in the Indo-Pacific through strength, not confrontation. To effectively compete in this challenging strategic environment, we require your continued support. On-time, stable appropriations are not an administrative convenience—they are a strategic imperative that equips our Airmen, ensures the readiness of our forces, and allows us to modernize for the conflicts of the future.

GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The United States, along with our Allies and partners, continues to face the challenge of deterring two major nuclear-armed competitors possessing modern, diverse, and expanding nuclear capabilities. The Russian Federation continues to modernize and develop novel systems, having openly stated in December 2025 that they had moved nuclear weapons to neighboring Belarus. The People's Republic of China (PRC) continues its unprecedented military expansion and in September 2025, unveiled the DF-5C intercontinental ballistic missile with potential fractional orbital bombardment system capability, enabling attacks from unconventional directions. Additionally, we confront the escalating nuclear threat presented by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the pursuit of nuclear weapons by an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) led Iran. The strategic challenge posed by Tehran has escalated dramatically. On February 28, 2026, building on previous actions such as the strikes during the 12-Day War, the U.S. and Israel launched "Operation EPIC FURY," a new, large-scale military campaign against Iran. While the U.S. and Israel quickly gained overwhelming air

superiority, Iran and its regional proxies demonstrated a continued intent and capacity to inflict damage. The ability to execute complex operations like Operation EPIC FURY and simultaneously deter multiple peer-level adversaries is directly dependent on sustained, stable, and predictable funding.

The PRC has already become the globe's number-two power and represents the most formidable state competitor the U.S. has encountered in over a century. Beijing continues to expand, modernize, and diversify its nuclear and conventional forces. The PRC's growing stockpile of deliverable air-, ground-, and sea-launched weapon systems pose a challenge to current United States and Allied missile defense systems beyond the Second Island Chain. Beijing remains on an accelerated pace to possess at least 1,000 operational nuclear warheads by the end of the decade, complicating the requirements for United States deterrence globally. The PRC's establishment of new missile fields and ICBMs will only enhance the degree of survivability, reliability, and effectiveness of PRC nuclear forces. Consequently, Beijing will possess new options for coercive purposes before and during a crisis or conflict. The PRC is also rapidly modernizing air and sea conventional capabilities with next-generation aircraft such as their announced H-20 bomber, and enhanced naval strike weapons to keep United States and Allied forces outside of optimum employment parameters in a regional conflict. Their nuclear force expansion is complemented by an increasing capacity to create plutonium from fast breed reactors, which will allow them to have nearly as many nuclear weapons deployed as the United States by 2035, if not sooner. Of additional concern is the PRC's deepening economic, diplomatic, and military support and alignment with Russia. Their economic and diplomatic support aids Russia's sustained war of aggression against Ukraine. For the first time last year, PRC and Russian bombers conducted a joint patrol in international airspace off the coast of

Alaska. The PRC's nuclear/conventional expansion efforts and ties to Russia raise the risk to United States and allied forces in the Indo-Pacific region.

Russia continues to emphasize nuclear weapons in its overall security strategy, even more so as Moscow faces significant conventional losses during its ongoing war against Ukraine. It is estimated that as of the end of 2025, Russian forces had suffered nearly 1.2 million casualties – both dead and wounded – since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Data from Ukrainian General Staff shows that Russian forces suffered 416,570 casualties throughout 2025. The exact numbers are difficult to determine, but the trend indicates continued heavy casualties. While the near-term conventional threat to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) appears to have waned, Russia maintains a robust nuclear force with modernized systems and a growing arsenal of novel asymmetric weapons. The end of this conflict remains unclear. However, it is clear that President Putin has no intention of halting the fight. Russia's nuclear rhetoric and signaling have only increased with Russia recently updating their nuclear doctrine, potentially lowering the threshold for using nuclear weapons. President Putin announced that Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons against any country that poses a critical threat, via conventional weapons, to Russian or Belarusian sovereignty and/or territorial integrity. President Putin additionally stated aggression against the Russian Federation and/or its allies from any non-nuclear state with the participation of or support from a nuclear state is viewed as a joint attack. This update raises concern among the international community, as it includes new criteria for what Russia perceives as a military danger.

While the DPRK is not a rival on the same scale as the PRC or Russia, it presents deterrence dilemmas for the United States and our Allies and partners. The DPRK poses a persistent threat and growing danger to the United States homeland and the Indo-Pacific region.

The DPRK continues to expand, diversify, and improve both conventional and nuclear strike capabilities. The further development of liquid- and solid-fueled missile systems will continue to complicate our ability to monitor and react to ballistic missile threats. The DPRK has expanded its partnership with Russia, which encourages the Kim regime's efforts to expand their weapons capabilities. Kim Jong-un praised troops fighting alongside Russia in Ukraine during his new year's message signaling Pyongyang's intention to sustain and deepen military cooperation with Moscow. In exchange, DPRK has received Russian support in the form of military cooperation-including joint military exercises, co-production of drones and artillery shells, and cooperation on air defense missiles and space technology. The DPRK and Russia continue to build upon the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed in June of 2024 which includes a mutual defense provision, meaning each country will provide military assistance if the other is attacked. This treaty highlights a deepening strategic alignment between these two countries, particularly in their opposition to the U.S. and our Allies. The agreement also includes cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, and nuclear energy. Since implementation of the treaty, the DPRK has deployed approximately 12,000 troops to Ukraine in support of Russian forces. This has resulted in heavy casualties for Korean People's Army troops, with estimates ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 soldiers killed or wounded but has improved DPRK combat capability. The situation remains tense on the Korean Peninsula. A conflict on the Peninsula could involve multiple nuclear-armed actors, raising the risk of escalation and nuclear employment.

Notwithstanding the recent Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear sites and conventional capabilities, Iran remains a concerning adversary. Iran's continued pursuit of an advanced nuclear program, including through production of highly enriched uranium, merits continued concern. Iran also remains intransigent, continuing to pursue destabilizing policies

across the region, providing material and lethal support to a range of terrorist organizations and militia groups. Indeed, Iran's longstanding support to Hamas enabled the October 7th terrorist attack against Israel and its continued support to the Houthis has enabled the recent attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and numerous attacks on United States forces across the region. Should Iran decide to continue to pursue a nuclear weapon, particularly in light of recent attacks against their military capabilities, it would further complicate the environment and challenge our ability to deter additional adversaries.

The strategic environment is more complex and dangerous than at any point in recent history. The United States now confronts the challenge of deterring a rapidly expanding China and a resurgent Russia, while managing persistent threats from North Korea and Iran. Critically, these are not isolated threats, but an emerging network of cooperation aimed squarely at undermining U.S. interests. We see this in the unprecedented joint bomber patrols by China and Russia and in the military-technical assistance Russia provides North Korea for its support in Ukraine. This interconnected support allows each aggressor to act with increased impunity, compounding security dilemmas and elevating the risk of miscalculation on a global scale. This reality demands a continued and urgent commitment to modernizing our own capabilities at scope and scale to ensure a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent, thereby safeguarding the nation and our allies against coercion and aggression.

ICBM OPERATIONS

The United States' Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force is a cornerstone of a credible and effective nuclear deterrent, serving as the most responsive component of the nuclear triad with its capacity for rapid, global strike. To ensure this capability remains uninterrupted, it

is imperative that the aging Minuteman III weapon system is provided on-time, stable funding today and throughout the complete transition to Sentinel.

Through the impressive work of our Airmen in the field, the Minuteman III continues to achieve a 98% Mission Capable rate with missiles on alert 24/7/365. Rollout of new weapon system support equipment will be integral to maintaining long term weapon system health. A major milestone was achieved with the deployment and certification of the Payload Transporter Replacement program for nuclear operations.

Sustaining the Minuteman III weapon system presents significant challenges primarily due to the complexities of securing replacement components due to parts obsolescence. Additionally, the supply chain is impacted by diminishing manufacturing sources and material shortages which drive increased lead time to procure critical weapon system parts. There is a total of 410 active weapon system age-out risks that could affect weapon system availability. Continuous steady weapon system and procurement funding is required to ensure viability of Minuteman III through the transition to Sentinel.

The Minuteman Minimum Essential Emergency Communications Network Program (MMP) and the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communication (NC3) capabilities embedded within the weapon system provide the critical link for nuclear command and control, enabling our Airmen to execute their missions effectively. NC3 requires continued focus and full sustainment funding to ensure continued operational availability to support our strategic nuclear objectives and safeguard national security.

The Minuteman III weapon system evaluation program evaluates combatant command reliability models and strategic planning factors. AFGSC is working to ensure our capability to

continue testing the weapon system through the end of its life to ensure it remains a reliable and effective deterrent until its eventual replacement by Sentinel. There are, however, limitations in test architecture that will impact testing capability as the Minuteman III moves closer to end of life:

1. Operational Test Launch (OTL) requirements will encounter test assembly scarcity and challenges with fielded missile components.

2. Minuteman III launch facilities and other test infrastructure at Vandenberg Space Force Base have been in continuous use for over 50 years. Significant investments in repairs and refurbishment or replacement will be required to maintain test launch capability through Minuteman III's end of life.

3. AFGSC anticipates a rise in range requirements due to Sentinel developmental and operational testing, other DoW weapons systems, and commercial space launch operations.

SECURITY RESPONSE FORCES

Our nuclear security teams, comprised of steadfast and highly trained professionals, stand ready to defend our nation's nuclear arsenal. However, they face a rapidly evolving threat landscape that requires constant adaptation and support. Our leaders are actively addressing the complex challenges of organizing, training, and equipping these defenders to meet current and emerging threats, from countering unmanned aircraft system (UAS) activity to operating in extreme weather conditions at our bomber and missile bases. Their crucial mission demands unwavering focus and investment as it remains central to U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) operational plans and national security.

Since 2016, AFGSC, with essential support from USSTRATCOM, advanced the development of counter-small unmanned aircraft systems (C-sUAS) technology to bolster our nation's strategic deterrence. The criticality of the Joint Urgent Operational Need identified by AFGSC was underscored in 2025, when five of the eight AFGSC bases experienced multiple UAS incursions and again in 2026 during OEF. Some of these incidents were not detected by our current systems at Barksdale Air Force Base, which highlights the acute vulnerability of our most sensitive military installations to hostile surveillance and disruption of operations, with corresponding risk to national security.

To effectively counter this evolving threat, the DoW has mobilized a coordinated, multi-organizational effort. The Joint C-sUAS Office and the Office of the Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment are leading the overarching strategy to outpace current and future UAS threats. DoW activated Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF 401) to coordinate Department's C-sUAS activities, ensuring the protection of critical assets, particularly within the continental United States. Concurrently, United States Northern Command is synchronizing all C-sUAS operations within the homeland.

AFGSC is a key contributor to these efforts, while simultaneously leveraging internal innovation to develop tailored solutions, including training efforts, for unique operational challenges posed by UAS threats to our ICBM fields, Weapons Storage Areas, Weapons Generation Facilities, and bomber forces.

As we proceed with the comprehensive modernization of our nuclear enterprise over the next decade, it is imperative that we concurrently prioritize and integrate the modernization of our defenses against the persistent and growing UAS threat. The ability to deter not only hostile threat actors, but also errant operators and curiosity seekers must remain foundational to

engaging the UAS threat. While messaging our capabilities can increase deterrence, within the Homeland legal deterrence is invaluable, especially when addressing curiosity seekers and errant operators.

The Department of Justice's Office of Legal Policy has noted in a summary titled, "Increasing Frequency of Criminal Offenses Involving Unmanned Aircraft Systems ("UAS" or Drones)," that "despite multiple prosecutions over the past five years for violating restricted airspace over major sporting events, drone operators continue to do so." The UAS threat to DoW operations is only increasing, and additional permanent, stronger solutions can increase legal deterrence prior to an adverse impact on mission execution or strategic capabilities.

On a related note, over the last decade, all those involved in national security matters have come to realize and place an increased focus on the critical role that our Defense Industrial Base plays in America's security and prosperity. Yet, today those critical defense contractor facilities responsible for some of the world's most exquisite and vital systems are not covered facilities that can be protected under Section 130i of Title 10. Whether the contractor facilities are supporting the B-21 bomber, Sentinel ICBM, the Columbia submarine program, the F-47 fighter, or the long range standoff weapon, they are clearly vital to the national defense and security of the United States. Even overflight creates risk.

To enhance the safety and lethality of our Security Forces, AFGSC is modernizing its vehicle fleet. This modernization effort directly addresses serious safety concerns surrounding the aging Up-Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (UAHMMWV), a platform tragically linked to multiple rollover accidents, resulting in three fatalities, at AFGSC ICBM wings, in 2023 and 2024. The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) is a modern and improved tactical vehicle providing better field of view, suspension systems, and modern safety features

compared to the currently employed UAHMMWV. 180 (88%) of the 205 JLTVs have been procured for AFGSC with 141 (69%) currently fielded and in operational use. The 25 remaining JLTVS are for three bomber locations (Barksdale AFB, Ellsworth AFB, and Dyess AFB). 180 (59%) of the total 303 Armored Utility Vehicles (AUV) have been procured with 35 (12%) AUVs currently fielded across the three missile wings.

AFGSC SF manning is 95% of currently funded authorizations. This was a 2% drop from last year, but this percentage drop was due to additional funded authorizations being executed in FY26. These authorizations support Weapons Generation Facilities (WGF) at Barksdale AFB and Ellsworth AFB as well as authorizations for Sentinel transition support at the three Missile Wings. While manning remains relatively high, I am concerned about the rank structure and experience levels of the forces entrusted with the security of our weapons.

HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

As AFGSC navigates numerous modernization efforts, the arrival of the MH-139A Grey Wolf marks a positive step towards strengthening the security posture of the ground-based nuclear deterrent. The MH-139A provides greater speed, range, and carrying capacity over the current UH-1N fleet. Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) was conducted 28 January – 30 June 2025. Air Force Operation Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC) drafted and released its report on 4 September 2025. Currently, the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) decision is scheduled for April 2026 with full deployment across all ICBM bases by 2028. The UH-1N continues to provide operational support as the fleet converts to the MH-139, with full divestment planned for 2030. The last operational UH-1N base will be at Minot AFB.

The current buy profile procures 34 aircraft for AFGSC bases. As of February 2026, 20 MH-139A helicopters have been delivered – eleven to Malmstrom AFB, seven to Maxwell AFB (FTU), and two to F.E. Warren AFB (diverted to Malmstrom until ~ April 2026).

AFGSC stood up the 550th Helicopter Squadron (provisional unit) located at Malmstrom AFB in April 2023 to provide aircrew conversion training from the UH-1N to the MH-139, and to support IOT&E, as well as conversion of the 40th Helicopter Squadron to support Initial IOC. The 40th Helicopter Squadron located at Malmstrom AFB, flew its first operational convoy with an MH-139A, on 8 January 2026. The arrival of the MH-139 Grey Wolf marks a necessary upgrade for AFGSC, bringing a more lethal presence to the defense of the land-based nuclear deterrent.

SENTINEL

The modernization of the United States' land-based nuclear deterrent, through the transition from the venerable Minuteman III to the next-generation Sentinel ICBM, represents one of the most critical and complex national security undertakings of our time. This monumental effort is not merely a replacement of hardware but a comprehensive strategic realignment involving a restructured program, vigilant senior leader oversight, an agile path to increased operational capability, and a massive infrastructure overhaul. The overarching goal is to field a resilient and technologically superior deterrent for the 21st century while ensuring the nation’s strategic stability remains unbroken throughout the transition.

At the core of this endeavor is a fundamentally restructured program strategy, born from lessons learned and strategic necessity. Following a critical review, Air Force Global Strike Command and the ICBM Program Executive Officer (PEO) worked together to revalidate the Sentinel’s system requirements and develop a comprehensive Concept of Operations

(CONOPS). This intensive process culminated on March 25, 2025, with the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force's endorsement of the program's updated operational requirements, placing it on a solid technical foundation. The strategic approach was further refined by the Deputy Secretary of War's 60-Day ICBM Study, which confirmed that the Minuteman III can maintain its deterrence viability with targeted enhancements, thus providing a crucial bridge during the transition. Following the 60-day study, the DRPM, Critical Major Weapon Systems (CMWS) was created as a direct report to the Deputy Secretary of War as the Milestone Decision Authority for Sentinel, among other programs. Since its inception, the DRPM, the Commander of USSTRATCOM, and I have been in close communication to ensure Sentinel delivery is not only accelerated, but also that it meets the needs of the Warfighter. The DRPM has adapted the acquisition strategy to accelerate key milestones and ensure an earlier fielding of the Sentinel system, supported by detailed trade studies and the finalization of the weapon system's technical baseline specifications.

The immense complexity of the Sentinel enterprise necessitates a robust and engaged governance structure. Senior leader collaboration is paramount, facilitated through a network of forums designed to ensure alignment and resolve issues across the entire program. The quarterly ICBM General Officer Steering Group (GOSG) serves as a primary venue for high-level decision-making on requirements, infrastructure, and testing. This is complemented by specialized summits that conduct deep dives into specific areas, such as the Launch Silo Concept Review to assess design risks and the Senior Sentinel Summit to validate operational concepts with warfighter input. Monthly boards, including the ICBM Modernization Recapitalization Board (IMRB) and the ICBM Modernization Council (IMC), ensure a continuous rhythm of oversight, bringing together all key stakeholders to synchronize efforts and maintain program

momentum.

The path to delivering this new capability has been redefined to be more agile and responsive. In a significant strategic shift, the criteria for IOC were reassessed to accelerate the delivery of a credible deterrent to the warfighter at the earliest possible opportunity. This philosophy is formally captured in the Sentinel Minimum Operational Criteria (MOC) memorandum, signed on October 30, 2025. The MOC provides the Air Force the flexibility to field the Sentinel system using a safe and secure incremental approach. The initial increment will be fully certified and fielded with a trained cadre, with subsequent increments adding capability until all operational requirements are met. This method allows the program to manage risk while fielding an effective deterrent faster.

Managing the physical transition from a legacy system to a new one is a monumental task fraught with logistical, technical, and personnel challenges. AFGSC is leading a comprehensive transition strategy that encompasses site activation, risk management, and sustainment of the Minuteman III. A key risk-reduction milestone was the transfer of Launch Facility E10 at F.E. Warren AFB to the Sentinel Task Force Detachment 10 in 2025. This action allows for early site preparation and system checkouts, providing invaluable lessons learned for future site transfers. To address the significant workforce demands of operating two ICBM systems concurrently, a RAND study was commissioned in December 2025 to provide independent analysis that will improve manpower projections and reduce the risk of personnel gaps during this critical period.

Concurrent with these strategic efforts is the tangible development of the system itself and the vast infrastructure required to support it. The Sentinel CONOPS has evolved through multiple iterations, with each version adding greater fidelity and incorporating warfighter feedback.

On the ground, progress is visible across the missile fields. Task Force Detachments are now established at all relevant bases, overseeing cultural and environmental surveys and extensive geotechnical boring across thousands of miles to prepare for construction. A utility corridor pilot project, set to begin in the summer of 2026, will mark the first major construction effort, informing costs and methods for the full-scale execution to follow. Military construction of key facilities—from test and training complexes at Vandenberg SFB to new Wing Command Centers and Missile Handling Complexes at F.E. Warren AFB, Malmstrom AFB, and Minot AFB—is advancing on a deliberate, phased schedule, transforming the physical landscape in preparation for the Sentinel era. Through this integrated and multi-pronged approach, the Air Force is methodically forging the future of the nation's land-based strategic deterrent.

BOMBER OPERATIONS

No other country in the world can match AFGSC's ability to conduct CONUS-to-CONUS range bomber missions at a time and place of our choosing. This allows AFGSC's bombers to play an essential role in maintaining conventional deterrence while simultaneously remaining available as nuclear platforms. This proven conventional long-range strike capabilities provide a unique deterrence capability which reduces the likelihood of specific reliance on nuclear deterrence. While AFGSC's conventional long-range strike is unmatched, sustainment and significant modernization of all weapon systems and munitions, enabling capabilities such as air refueling aircraft, and integrated global fires are essential to conducting long-range strike operations in the near-term and against more advanced future threats.

B-1B LANCER

The B-1B Lancer serves as the indispensable workhorse of our conventional bomber force. Time and again, the B-1B has led the way in combat, and its consistent presence in

Bomber Task Force missions. In OPERATION ABSOLUTE RESOLVE the B-1s conducted the initial strikes which kicked down the door and supported special operations and law enforcement personnel on the ground. More recently in OPERATION EPIC FURY, they again demonstrated our nation's ability to hold any target at risk, anywhere on the globe by first conducting CONUS-to-CONUS missions before seamlessly deploying forward.

However, this critical platform is facing a severe readiness challenge, caught between high operational demand and the realities of an aging airframe. The B-1B fleet has flown past its originally scheduled lifespan, and the structural integrity of the aircraft is a primary concern. Extensive, time-consuming inspections and repairs, such as the Forward Intermediate Fuselage Replacement and the Aircraft Structural Integrity Program, are imperative to keep the B-1B flying safely, but they drive longer downtimes and reduce aircraft availability.

Compounding this structural fatigue is a growing crisis in our supply chain. Parts reliability and the availability of piece parts are the top constraints on our flying hour program. We are witnessing a rising Total Non-Mission Capable for Supply (TNMCS) rate, which directly leads to increased aircraft downtime and higher, unsustainable rates of cannibalization. The root causes are familiar and systemic: diminishing manufacturing sources, a declining vendor base, and long lead times for repairs.

To counter these challenges and ensure the B-1B remains a viable and lethal platform, it is undergoing the most significant modernization effort in its 30-year history. Through the innovative B-1 Embracing Agile Scheduling Team (BEAST) program, we are executing a suite of accelerated upgrades. This includes enhancing its friend-or-foe identification, installing more secure communications, and improving its defensive systems. Crucially, we are also fielding a

modernized simulator and digital twin technology to enable more effective training and proactive, predictive maintenance.

As a combat-proven platform and a cornerstone of our conventional deterrence strategy, the B-1B remains a vital instrument of American airpower. Continued investment in its modernization—especially its avionics, to ensure compatibility in joint operations—and structural sustainment programs is not just necessary, it is imperative to bridge the gap until the B-21 Raider is operational. We must continue to support this workhorse to ensure it can answer the nation's call.

B-2A SPIRIT

As the United States Air Force's – and the world's – premier penetrating bomber, the B-2A Spirit provides an unmatched, world-class stealth and strike capability that makes it a cornerstone of both our conventional and nuclear deterrence strategies. This was demonstrated yet again during OPERATION MIDNIGHT HAMMER and OPERATION EPIC FURY.

To maintain a credible strategic deterrent until the B-21 Raider achieves full operational capability, modernizing and sustaining the B-2A fleet is a national security imperative. Our efforts are focused on targeted upgrades that ensure the B-2A maintains its lethal edge. These include modifications to its low-observable signature and overall supportability, advanced communications suites, and enhanced weapons delivery systems.

Key programs are making progress. The Adaptable Communications Suite is complete with test and evaluation, and we are accelerating its fielding in Fiscal Year 2026. Furthermore, the B-2A Displays Modernization Program entered production in late Fiscal Year 2025 and is delivering to the supply system, which will alleviate the second-leading cause of non-mission capable incidents for the fleet.

These modernization efforts are essential to bridge the strategic capability gap until the B-21 is fully fielded. This transitional period reinforces the need for continued investment across the entire bomber enterprise, including the B-1B, to ensure we can meet any threat, at any time.

B-52H STRATOFORTRESS

The B-52 Stratofortress has served as the enduring backbone and global symbol of America's long-range strike capability. Its relevance was proven again in OPERATION EPIC FURY, and to ensure it continues to deliver decisive combat power beyond 2050, we are executing a landmark modernization effort to transform the B-52H into the more lethal B-52J. This is not merely an upgrade program; it is an essential investment in the future viability of our strategic bomber force.

However, this critical modernization effort and our present-day readiness are being directly undermined by a systemic crisis within our supply chain. The single greatest threat to B-52 readiness is not an adversary, but the compounded effects of parts availability and parts obsolescence. The decline of the industrial base, Diminishing Manufacturing Sources, and extended repair times have created a supportability crisis that erodes our combat capability. This directly impacts everything from Programmed Depot Maintenance (PDM) to daily operations, limiting our ability to meet Higher Headquarters demand signal.

The strain on the force is immense. The B-52 cannibalization rate, the practice of stripping parts from one aircraft to make another flyable, far exceeds the 30% standard, reaching a staggering peak of 140% in January 2024. In Fiscal Year 2025 alone, a 70% average rate cost us 13,800 personnel hours—time our expert maintainers should be spending on sustainable readiness, not institutionalized scavenging. Recently, we were forced to cannibalize parts from six separate aircraft just to support a single Higher Headquarters tasking.

These challenges are a direct driver of our aircraft availability. While the current availability rate of 53% is a 10-year high for the enterprise, it remains far below the "North Star 55" mandate—a requirement for 55 mission-capable aircraft set by our operational requirements. This gap is exacerbated by two factors: our PDM pipeline has more aircraft in process than we can afford, and an aggressive but necessary modernization schedule assigns eight aircraft to testing, double the standard allotment.

Even as global demand for our bomber's surges, our ability to meet that demand is being choked by a fragile supply chain. The visible presence of our B-52s provides a critical deterrent to our adversaries and assurance to our allies, which is only possible with a healthy and sustainable fleet.

Part of AFGSC's major modernization efforts for its aging B-52H fleet, includes re-engining the bomber, upgrading its radar to an Active Electronically Scanned Array system for improved reliability and mission effectiveness, and procuring a new Weapon System Trainer to simulate future B-52H configurations and capabilities.

The B-52H Commercial Engine Replacement Program (CERP) replaces the current TF-33 engines which are unsustainable beyond 2030 with Rolls Royce F130 turbofan engines. To assist this endeavor, a $200M Agile Common Hangar is under construction at Tinker AFB to support F130 engine integration and will also provide increased depot maintenance support for the B-21 in the future. The Radar Modernization Program (RMP) will install a modified off-the-shelf radar to replace the current 1960's vintage strategic radar system facing parts obsolescence.

The current B-52 Simulators are antiquated, incapable of performing mission rehearsals and aircrew training requirements, and unable to be updated with the latest aircraft modifications such as CERP & RMP. These inadequate simulators are one of the biggest drivers of reduced

aircraft and aircrew readiness. To mitigate these challenges, AFGSC will incorporate the Mission Employment Trainer (MET) Family of Systems by FY30 to support 100% of B-52 crew force training needs. MET will also integrate the B-52 into Joint training opportunities through the Distributed Mission Operations and the Joint Simulation Environment.

B-21 RAIDER

The B-21 Raider program is demonstrably advancing and solidifying this new bomber as the cornerstone of future U.S. long-range strike and strategic deterrence. The B-21's core mission remains to hold any target at risk despite sophisticated anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) networks developed by peer competitors like China and Russia. Its sixth-generation stealth capabilities are a generational leap forward to ensure it can penetrate the most advanced air defenses for decades, forcing adversaries to continue investing in costly defensive measures, diverting resources from offensive systems, and shaping their strategic calculus.

As a "sixth-generation" aircraft, the B-21 Raider is optimized as a survivable, networked sensor-shooter. Its design includes key features that allow for rapid integration of new technologies, software, and weapons to counter evolving threats. This is accomplished by employing a digital-first approach that leverages the “digital trinity” of engineering, agile software, and open architecture, ensuring the B-21 will function as an adaptable, multi-domain asset that enhances joint operations and situational awareness.

The B-21 program has moved beyond a transactional relationship to one built on transparency and shared accountability. The results are tangible. The B-21 is on track, with its flight test campaign underway at Edwards Air Force Base. Thanks to the support of Congress, we are investing $4.5B in FY26 to accelerate production. A recent agreement with Northrop

Grumman will increase annual B-21 production capacity by 25%, compressing delivery timelines. We remain on schedule for the first aircraft to be on the ramp at Ellsworth Air Force Base in 2027, and our plan to field a fleet of at least one hundred B-21s is firmly on course.

As regimes challenge the American national interests, the B-21 provides a credible and flexible deterrent. Its ability to conduct penetrating strikes complicates adversary planning and provides a powerful response option if deterrence fails, making it a crucial tool for managing escalation in a multipolar conflict.

LONG RANGE STANDOFF WEAPON

As the commander, I am charged by statute with the strategic direction of the Air Force's nuclear enterprise. In this role, I articulate the operational needs of our nuclear forces to key stakeholders, including U.S. Strategic Command and Headquarters Air Force. I champion funding requirements, allocate critical resources, and establish the policies necessary to guarantee the readiness and reliability of all nuclear forces under my command. Ultimately, these efforts ensure our nuclear systems are seamlessly integrated into the nation's strategic nuclear architecture.

The Long Range Standoff (LRSO) weapon is a key component of our modernization effort. The Air Force is replacing its aging Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) with LRSO, which is being designed, developed, and deployed as a modern nuclear-capable cruise missile. The LRSO program is fundamental to the modernization of the nation's nuclear deterrent and is a top priority for both USSTRATCOM and the Air Force. LRSO is designed as a low observable, survivable, and lethal cruise missile. Bombers equipped with LRSO will provide a visible recallable/re-targetable nuclear capability that can hold any target at risk in support of tailored assurance and deterrence objectives. Successful flight tests and tight schedule adherence have

positively highlighted the program. Despite some FY26 reductions, the LRSO Program Office has proactively implemented a robust strategy to mitigate delays and remain on schedule for critical milestones. Any further reductions, delays, or continuing resolutions will jeopardize the program's ability to meet its scheduled 2030 IOC and will create a gap in our strategic deterrent capabilities.

WEAPONS GENERATION FACILITY

The command continues to execute our long-term plan to recapitalize aging Weapon Storage Areas (WSA) into new WGFs. These facilities fulfill a major security initiative for the command and help ensure nuclear security by significantly reducing operational, logistical, and munitions risk. The sequencing and timing of the WGF recapitalization efforts are driven by operational requirements and outdated WSA conditions. Of the seven needed, one is in the FY26-30 Future Years Defense Plan, four are under construction and one is in planning and design. Of those under construction, two are bomber WGFs and two are ICBM WGFs. F.E. Warren AFB has seen the first construction complete WGF and is scheduled to reach full operational capability (FOC) in late 2026. The timing and sequencing of the modernization endeavor and delivery of all seven WGFs are critical to sustaining deterrence while ensuring integration of and support to new mission weapon systems.

NUCLEAR COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS (NC3)

The foundational principle of our national defense is the President's sole authority to command and control the nation’s nuclear forces. Air Force Global Strike Command is charged with the responsibility of ensuring these directives are communicated without fail. This requires

an NC3 posture that is resilient, secure, and fully prepared to operate under the most challenging conditions imaginable.

Our current NC3 architecture is a complex portfolio of systems that have served the nation faithfully, but we are at a critical inflection point where modernization is an absolute necessity. Sustained, sufficient, and predictable funding for this no-fail enterprise is a national security imperative. Every dollar invested in NC3 is a direct investment in the survivability of our nation, allowing us to recapitalize aging infrastructure and accelerate the deployment of next-generation technologies.

We are executing a multi-faceted strategy to upgrade legacy systems, ensuring our strategic forces remain connected to national leadership. For our ICBM force, we have completed the fielding of the Minuteman Minimum Essential Emergency Communications Network Program Update (MMPU) and are planning for its replacement, which will ensure connectivity with future satellite constellations. To further enhance resilience, we are fielding a modernized Very Low Frequency receiver compatible with new cryptographic standards.

For the air-breathing leg of the triad, we are fielding advanced beyond-line-of-sight communications for our B-52 fleet and new connectivity for our command posts and mobile support teams. Beyond these platform-specific upgrades, we are strengthening our foundational, enterprise-wide capabilities. This includes modernizing our critical command and control software with an upgrade known as the Strategic Mission Planning and Execution System. This provides reliable communications for senior leader decision-making and unifies legacy mission planning systems into a single, real-time collaborative tool. Finally, we are developing a resilient, non-space-based digital communications network to harden our systems against advanced threats.

In an era of persistent cyber threats, protecting our NC3 systems is synonymous with protecting the nation. We are committed to implementing a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy that treats the security of these critical assets as an integrated component of the entire system starting with design, and not as an afterthought. This holistic approach requires us to defend our networks, from the individual Airman at the console to our space-based communication nodes. We are transforming into a data-driven command, leveraging advanced analytics and machine learning to sense, monitor, and defend against intrusions and denial-of-service attacks. While we embrace these technologies to enhance our defensive posture, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that a human is always in control, making the critical decisions that safeguard our nation and its allies. With your continued and stable support, we will continue to strengthen this cornerstone of deterrence, ensuring our strategic forces remain connected, protected, and ready to answer the nation's call without fail or delay.

NATIONAL AIRBORNE OPERATIONS CENTER/SURVIVABLE AIRBORNE OPERATIONS CENTER

The E-4B National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC) provides our nation with a survivable and enduring command and control platform, but this critical fleet is approaching the end of its service life and faces significant sustainment challenges. Aircraft availability is the paramount concern, driven by the low-density, high-demand nature of the four-aircraft fleet.

The primary drivers of this availability crisis are the aircraft's age, lengthening PDM timelines, parts obsolescence, and diminishing manufacturing sources. To mitigate these issues, we are pursuing initiatives such as optimizing PDM flow and creatively sourcing parts, including recovering unused components from a retired NASA 747.

As we bridge the gap to the replacement platform—the Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC)—we are executing targeted modernization to sustain the E-4B's mission systems. Ongoing programs include upgrades to its Low Frequency Transmit System, the Family of Advanced Beyond Line-of-Sight Terminals (FAB-T), and survivable satellite communications. Throughout this transition, we must carefully balance these essential modernization efforts against the pressing, daily need for aircraft availability until SAOC is fully operational.

AIRMEN AND FAMILIES

AFGSC's combat readiness is forged by the unwavering, 24/7 dedication of our Striker Airmen. While advanced platforms like the B-21 Raider and the Sentinel ICBM are essential to our modernization, it is the human element—the highly-trained and deeply committed Airman—that remains the bedrock of our nation's strategic deterrence.

This dedication is not an abstract concept. It is the tangible, around-the-clock work of Strikers across the country. It is the missileer on alert deep underground, maintaining a vigil that has not wavered for over 60 years. It is the Security Forces Defender standing guard in the harsh winters of the American heartland, safeguarding hundreds of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. It is the B-2 pilot stealthily penetrating Iranian airspace to deliver a crippling blow to that country's nuclear program. It is the maintainer on a frigid flight line, demonstrating incredible resourcefulness to keep aging, yet still formidable, weapon systems ready to go at a moment's notice. It is the bomber crew executing a complex, global mission to assure our allies and deter our adversaries. It is the intel analyst, the cyber operator, the helicopter pilot, the chef in a remote

missile alert facility, and the communications specialist whose collective efforts ensure our nuclear forces are safe, secure, and effective.

Every hour of every day, these Airmen perform the meticulous and often arduous work required to sustain our nuclear and conventional forces. From the crew chief inspecting every inch of a bomber to the defender securing a remote site, it is the professionalism, leadership, and disciplined execution of the Airmen of Global Strike Command that underpins our Nation's security. This constant vigilance sends an unmistakable signal to our adversaries and a message of assurance to our allies: America's shield is held by a force that is always ready.

INNOVATION

In Global Strike Command, we are deliberately fostering a culture where every Airman is empowered to innovate, look at legacy challenges with fresh eyes, and build 21st-century solutions.

This approach yields tangible results. A powerful example is the winner of this year's Air Force Spark Tank competition—one of our very own Strikers who invented a Pylon Loader Adapter for the B-52. This simple, brilliant device streamlines the complex process of installing missile pylons, increasing safety for our maintainers and improving the speed of our operations. We are scaling this ingenuity through targeted efforts like our Striker Analysts and Coders Program, which trains Airmen to solve problems with software. One graduate developed the Nuclear Operations Centralized System, a single application that replaced a vast array of outdated trackers, saving over 10,000 man-hours annually.

This culture of innovation is built upon a foundation of uncompromising professionalism and accountability. The core of our nuclear mission is its people, and we enforce stringent

standards through the Personnel Reliability Assurance Program (PRAP), employing a rigorous selection process and ongoing training to reinforce nuclear surety. We promote a command climate where Airmen feel comfortable reporting concerns, backed by a strong culture of peer-to-peer accountability. To that end, a Cross-Functional Team of nuclear professionals recently reviewed our Nuclear Certified Equipment across the command, analyzing over 4,200 assets and finding no significant issues, a testament to the integrity of our processes.

However, we face significant challenges in manning the force. While all specialties are vital, we closely monitor 10 "critical" nuclear career fields where gaps in assigned personnel or experience pose a significant risk to the mission. Our manning for these areas currently averages 80 percent. This is not entirely a bad-news story; it is a reflection of growth. Thanks to the recognition and resources provided by Congress, we have received funding for new positions to support both our legacy platforms and modernization efforts. The challenge now is to recruit and retain the specialized talent to fill them. We are partnering with the Air Force's recruiting, personnel, and training commands to cover the entire talent management lifecycle for these vital Airmen.

By empowering our people and harnessing their ingenuity, we are ensuring that Air Force Global Strike Command remains the safe, secure, and effective deterrent force our nation requires.

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

To ensure our Strikers remain the decisive element of deterrence, Air Force Global Strike Command is focused on building resilient, capable, and mission-focused leaders. To that end, we

are deliberately developing our people through strategic education and targeted developmental opportunities, forming the bedrock of our enduring advantage.

Our talent management efforts ensure the right Airmen, with the right experience, are placed in the right jobs at the right time. We continue to foster academic outreach through partnerships with leading universities, providing Airmen access to advanced education in defense and strategic studies. This is complemented by a suite of our own education programs uniquely focused on the leadership challenges of the nuclear and long-range strike mission. These courses prepare our senior leaders for the unique responsibilities of command while cultivating a foundational understanding of our mission at the tactical edge.

Air Force Global Strike Command is also shaping the next generation of strategic thinkers through Professional Military Education. Our flagship effort remains the sponsorship of the School of Advanced Nuclear Deterrence Studies, which develops premier deterrence experts to advise senior leaders across the Department of War. We also directly support Air War College's nuclear curriculum, ensuring our command's perspective is integrated at the highest levels of officer development.

In addition to formal education, we offer coveted internship programs that provide exceptional officers, enlisted, and civilian personnel with invaluable, hands-on experience in the nuclear enterprise. Our commitment to joint operations is exemplified by a successful officer exchange program with the U.S. Navy. By deliberately cultivating our talent through these unique developmental opportunities, we are ensuring the next generation of innovative leaders are prepared to provide safe, secure, and lethal combat-ready forces. This investment in people remains our most critical contribution to national security.

EXERCISES

Air Force Global Strike Command’s rigorous exercise program is a key part of the nation's strategic deterrent, demonstrating that our forces are healthy, reliable, and lethal. The recent success of exercise Global Thunder 2026 unequivocally proved the readiness of our nuclear enterprise. During the exercise, our bomber force set a new command benchmark for continuous aircraft generation, while our ICBM wings maintained stellar readiness rates and flawlessly executed an unarmed test launch.

This level of performance validates our ability to execute precision strikes on global targets in highly contested environments. It is a direct result of sustained investment and the dedication of our Airmen, confirming that the nuclear enterprise is always ready. These successes are mirrored in demanding conventional exercises like Valiant Shield and Bamboo Eagle, where our bomber crews set record-setting generation times for long-duration missions, seamlessly integrating with allied partners to hold any adversary at risk.

As we execute these high-tempo operations, we are also in the midst of a comprehensive strategic deterrent modernization. The successful progression of the B-21 Raider and the Sentinel ICBM programs are critical to our future force. We are integrating these new systems into our exercises to ensure our Airmen are not just equipped with advanced technology but are proficient in its application.

From nuclear readiness to conventional strike, these exercises are a powerful testament to our commitment to "Peace through Strength." However, this entire modernization and readiness demand is fundamentally dependent on stable and timely funding. Failure to provide on-time authorization and appropriations will leave the command inadequately prepared for the geopolitical and technological challenges the nation faces.

AIRMEN AND FAMILY CONCERNS

In Air Force Global Strike Command, we recognize that the professional fulfillment of our military spouses is a mission readiness imperative. We are proactively addressing the unique career challenges they face, from frequent relocations to licensure portability, to foster an environment where they can achieve their professional goals.

The cornerstone of our support is the robust Employment Assistance Program delivered through our installation Military & Family Readiness Centers, which provide a comprehensive suite of career services and resources. We also provide direct financial relief, offering reimbursement of up to $1,000 for costs related to transferring occupational licenses or relocating a small business during a move.

A landmark achievement is the successful transition of the Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot into a permanent program. This initiative offers paid 12-week fellowships with leading civilian employers, providing invaluable experience and a direct pathway to employment. Furthermore, our advocacy at the policy level has secured legislative victories, such as expanded unemployment benefits for spouses after a move in North Dakota, and we continue to champion similar progress elsewhere.

By empowering our military spouses to thrive professionally, we enhance family resilience, improve retention, and ensure the long-term readiness of the force.

MISSILE COMMUNITY CANCER STUDY

The Missile Community Cancer Study (MCCS) consists of an environmental hazard sampling plan at current operational sites as well as an epidemiologic study of cancer incidence from medical records and registries, and a burn study examining the historical practice of

burning classified material in Launch Control Centers. All environmental samples of air, water, and soil from current operational and training missile facilities were within the acceptable regulatory levels. Four out of 1205 total surface swipe samples for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in three Missile Alert Facilities were over the Environmental Protection Agency recommended threshold and required mitigation. These mitigation efforts include cleaning and other remediation actions. Preliminary data from Phases 1A and 1B of the epidemiologic study has shown no increased incidence rate of the 14 common cancers in the Missile Community when compared to the non-Missile Community or to the general U.S. population. Phase 1C did not identify a statistically significant elevated mortality of these cancers in the Missile Community when compared to the general U.S. population. Phase 2 analysis incorporated state registry data and showed an elevated incidence in Testicular Cancer and Hodgkin Lymphoma in the missile community when compared to the non-missile community and a statistically significant higher incidence of melanoma in the missile community when compared to the U.S. population. However, Hodgkin Lymphoma and testicular cancer are not typically associated with adult occupational exposure, nor melanoma which is typically associated with UV exposure. Phase 2 will continue with an in-depth review of specific jobs, time periods, and locations, where feasible. As of now, while an increased incidence rates of two cancers were identified, the cause of the increase remains unknown at this time. The burn study included two components: a chemical analysis of emissions that could be generated from burning the classified material, and physics-based modeling to predict potential exposure concentrations. The overall cancer and health risk for significant long-term health effects due to this former practice is low, with the specific cancer risk found to be above the threshold for “negligible” effect, but less than “marginal” effect. In this context “negligible” means personnel may experience some

minor eye or respiratory irritation but not require medical treatment. The chemicals detected were primarily associated with eye and respiratory irritation. AFGSC has remained engaged with the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine, the Defense Centers for Public Health-Dayton Epidemiology Consult Service, and Veterans Affairs throughout the execution of the study.

Additionally, AFGSC is collaborating with other Department of War agencies to update and expand current government systems to improve individual exposure tracking and documentation for our Airmen. AFGSC has also worked to maintain transparency by conducting quarterly town halls, maintaining a publicly accessible webpage, and sharing updates with key stakeholders like the Veteran's Administration, and interested parties, which will continue through study completion and follow-on actions.

CONCLUSION

Air Force Global Strike Command stands at a pivotal moment in its history. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs recently remarked, marveling at the US bomber force for their "decisive" contribution to OPERATION EPIC FURY, "we hand these Americans – young Americans – incredible and weighty responsibility, and they deliver every single time for you." While this success is a testament to their skill, it also serves as a reminder that our legacy fleet is operating on borrowed time. The high operational tempo required for EPIC FURY has pushed these systems to their limits. The brave Airmen of Air Force Global Strike Command operate weapon systems that have served for generations, with most of these systems having entered service well before most of the Airmen operating them were born. Yet the demand for these capabilities and the threats they are meant to deter has never been greater. There is no margin left in our legacy forces.

Our path forward remains clear, guided by our strategic priorities: maintaining the absolute readiness of the force you see operating around the globe today; driving the critical modernization needed for the conflicts of tomorrow; and Building the Global Strike Team of empowered Airmen and allies who make it all possible.

The Airmen of Air Force Global Strike Command are meeting this challenge with unparalleled professionalism and dedication, but they cannot do it alone. The balance between sustaining a credible conventional and nuclear deterrent force today and building the force of the future is delicate and requires your unwavering partnership. On-time, stable funding is not a line item in a budget; it is the bedrock upon which our nation's security rests. I want to thank this committee for your continued support. Together, we will ensure that Air Force Global Strike Command remains always ready to provide decisive, long-range strike capabilities to the joint force, anytime and anywhere.