

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

Subcommittee on Airland

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON
AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION
IN REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 AND
THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

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9 U.S. Senate
10 Subcommittee on Airland
11 Committee on Armed Services
12 Washington, D.C.

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14 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:03 p.m.
15 in Room SR-232-A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Tom
16 Cotton, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

17 Subcommittee Members Present: Senators Cotton
18 [presiding], Scott, King, Blumenthal, and Jones.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TOM COTTON, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM ARKANSAS

3 Senator Cotton: This hearing of the Airland Power
4 Subcommittee will come to order.

5 The committee meets today to receive testimony on the
6 modernization of the U.S. Air Force and its fiscal year 2020
7 budget request.

8 We welcome General Arnold Bunch, the Military Deputy to
9 the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition,
10 Technology and Logistics; General Tim Fay, Deputy Chief of
11 Staff for Strategy, Integration and Requirements; and
12 General Brian Robinson, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for
13 Operations. Thank you all, gentlemen, for your appearance
14 today.

15 The National Defense Strategy directs our nation's
16 military to prepare for the return of great power
17 competition. This means we must be prepared to deter and,
18 if necessary, defeat potential peer adversaries like China
19 and Russia. In order for the Air Force to achieve that
20 goal, it must be properly manned, trained, and equipped.
21 Unfortunately, as pointed out by the National Defense
22 Strategy Commission, we are still in a readiness and
23 modernization crisis.

24 By the end of 2016, the Air Force was at a historic low
25 in readiness. Fewer than 10 percent of combat squadrons

1 were ready to deploy and even fewer were prepared for a peer
2 fight. We have made some progress in rebuilding readiness,
3 but more needs to be done.

4 Unfortunately, while our forces stagnated or declined,
5 our adversaries recapitalized their forces with alarming
6 speed. China and Russia now present a real threat to
7 America, our allies, and increasingly the civilized world.
8 In fact, in some areas they have surpassed us.

9 Despite years of neglect, our men and women have done
10 an outstanding job for the nation, but it is past time for
11 action.

12 The Secretary of the Air Force recently testified that
13 our Air Force is too small and too old to do what the nation
14 asks and that the Air Force needs to grow to 386 squadrons.
15 And I agree on the need to both grow and modernize.

16 The future of our Air Force's readiness and relevance
17 requires both now. Any successful modernization strategy
18 must focus on results and meeting the needs of tomorrow's
19 fight. Building relevant technology quickly will require
20 discipline and acquisition strategies. It will also require
21 rapid prototyping, experimentation, such as the light attack
22 experiment in order to get modern, reliable, and lethal
23 systems into the hands of our warfighters on time and on
24 budget.

25 I am interested to hear today from our witnesses what

1 progress already has been made and what capabilities
2 currently are in development. Executing this strategy will
3 require an open and transparent dialogue with Congress. We
4 look forward to working with you to make our shared
5 modernization vision a reality and ensure the Air Force is
6 prepared for the more lethal and dynamic battlefields of the
7 future.

8 Senator King?

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. ANGUS KING, U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

2 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 And, Mr. Chairman, I want to extend a welcome as well
4 to each of our witnesses appearing the subcommittee. I look
5 forward to hearing your testimony.

6 Earlier this year, this subcommittee heard from Army
7 witnesses about the challenges in the Army modernization
8 portfolio. I look forward to hearing today from the Air
9 Force witnesses about the challenges and opportunities they
10 face in modernizing the Air Force. Earlier this year, we
11 also had a closed briefing on the B-21 bomber program.

12 I am especially interested in hearing from the
13 witnesses how the Air Force plans to manage its multiple
14 modernization programs in ways that deliver the capabilities
15 that our warfighters need in a timely manner to defeat our
16 most capable adversaries while protecting our taxpayers'
17 dollars.

18 The Air Force has been particularly aggressive in
19 implementing accelerated acquisition authorities, including
20 for major defense acquisition programs. Congress has given
21 the Department of Defense these new authorities, and the job
22 of Congress is now to oversee the Department to ensure that
23 the Department uses its authorities to pursue these
24 modernization programs in a more efficient and effective
25 manner.

1 Our witnesses this afternoon face huge challenges,
2 which I am sure they know, as they strive to balance the
3 need to support ongoing operations and sustain readiness
4 with the need to modernize and keep the technological edge
5 so critical to successful military operations. I cannot
6 help but think of the old story about building the airplane
7 as you are flying it, and you guys are pretty close to that
8 challenge.

9 Specifically, our Air Force will bear a large share of
10 the burden of implementing the National Defense Strategy
11 that identifies inter-state strategic competition with
12 increasingly capable adversaries as the primary U.S.
13 national security concern.

14 These challenges have been made particularly difficult
15 by the spending caps imposed in 2011 by the Budget Control
16 Act. Last year, we had the benefit of an early budget and
17 an agreement that included increases in the Department of
18 Defense top line. This year we are again facing the
19 constraints of the caps in the Budget Control Act unless
20 Congress acts to the contrary.

21 The President's budget includes an attempt to finesse
22 the caps for the Department of Defense by moving a large
23 portion of the base budget into the overseas contingency
24 operations, or OCO, accounts that are exempt from the caps,
25 specifically using something, a new term to me, "OCO for

1 base." I in one previous hearing said that is like rabbits
2 for bicycles. The two things are not related. OCO is not
3 base, but that is the world that we are in. While I support
4 an adequate budget for the Department, I do not support such
5 budgeting gimmicks. I hope that we can move quickly to
6 achieve an honest agreement on the budget resolution for
7 fiscal year 2020 that does not include such things as OCO
8 for base so that we can avoid delays in getting the
9 necessary resources to the Defense Department, to the Air
10 Force, and to other parts of the United States Government.

11 There are a number of other issues we need to discuss,
12 but in the interest of time, I will stop here and wait for
13 our discussion.

14 Again, I want to thank you to our witnesses, and thank
15 you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing.

16 Senator Cotton: Thank you, Senator King.

17 General Bunch?

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL ARNOLD W. BUNCH, JR.,
2 USAF, MILITARY DEPUTY FOR OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
3 OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ACQUISITION, TECHNOLOGY AND LOGISTICS;
4 ACCOMPANIED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL TIMOTHY G. FAY, USAF,
5 DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR STRATEGY, INTEGRATION AND
6 REQUIREMENTS, HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE; AND
7 MAJOR GENERAL BRIAN S. ROBINSON, USAF, ASSISTANT DEPUTY
8 CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS, HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES
9 AIR FORCE

10 General Bunch: Good afternoon, Chairman Cotton,
11 Ranking Member King, and distinguished members of the
12 subcommittee. Thank you for having us here today to provide
13 testimony on Air Force modernization and priorities for
14 fiscal year 2020.

15 Additionally, we appreciate your service, leadership,
16 and dedication to rebuilding the United States military and
17 supporting our airmen and their families. We also thank you
18 for an on-time defense bill last year and hope that that
19 trend continues. Stable, adequate, timely budgets are vital
20 to our efforts to restore readiness and modernize to meet
21 the nation's challenges.

22 Today I am accompanied by Lieutenant General Tim Fay
23 and Major General Brian Robinson. We have prepared a joint
24 statement that I request be entered into the official
25 record, and I will provide brief opening remarks for the

1 team.

2 Senator Cotton: Without objection.

3 General Bunch: When you consider the scale and scope
4 of what our nation demands of us, today's security
5 environment is perhaps one of the most challenging we have
6 faced as an Air Force. We face challenges in and across all
7 domains in which we operate. We are in global competition
8 across the spectrum of potential operations, ranging from
9 countering malign influence in gray zones all the way to
10 deterring nuclear war. We cannot allow the gap between
11 national security demands and the resources provided to meet
12 those demands to grow, all while we continue to operate at a
13 pace that challenges readiness.

14 As captured in the National Defense Strategy, the
15 United States faces an increasingly complex global security
16 environment, characterized by long-term strategic
17 competition, a rapidly growing China and resurgent Russia
18 aimed to coerce their regional neighbors, undermine
19 longstanding alliances, and displace American influence from
20 critical regions around the globe.

21 Your Air Force must be ready to compete, deter, and win
22 in these complex and evolving security environments. We
23 must defend the homeland and provide a safe, secure, and
24 effective nuclear deterrent and be able to defeat a powerful
25 conventional enemy and continue to disrupt violent

1 extremists and other tasks. The Air Force must be prepared
2 to do all of these missions each and every day.

3 As we have analyzed this array of mission sets, the
4 unmistakable conclusion is the Air Force is too small for
5 what our nation needs. Our airmen perform strategic and
6 vital missions in all domains across the spectrum of
7 conflict from 60 feet below the ground to our highest
8 geosynchronous orbits. We are always there meeting and
9 rising to the challenges by defeating our adversaries,
10 deterring threats, and ensuring our allies 24 hours a day, 7
11 days a week, 365 days a year, and serving as a beacon of
12 hope for many nations around the world.

13 Thanks to your help in recent years, together we have
14 made solid gains in improving wartime readiness and
15 returning some fiscal stability, but there remains work to
16 be done, particularly in the area of modernization, force
17 structure capacity, and warfighting capability. The
18 dialogue we have today will help us as we design and build a
19 better future worthy of tomorrow's airmen and our nation.
20 We cannot win this contest with an acquisition system from
21 the Cold war. We must modernize at the speed of relevance.
22 We are building tomorrow's Air Force more lethal and ready,
23 faster and smarter.

24 We are utilizing the new authorities you granted us
25 like section 804 and tailoring traditional acquisition

1 approaches to buy equipment and capabilities and experiment
2 and prototype in new ways to meet a rapidly innovating
3 adversary. As of the end of February of 2019, we estimate
4 that we have save over 88 years of acquisition schedule
5 through the use of these tailored acquisitions and section
6 804 authorities. We are confident that our initial goal of
7 saving 100 years will be accomplished in less than 1 year of
8 the pursuit. As a result, we are modernizing at the speed
9 of relevance.

10 We are also doing this in a way that is as transparent
11 or more transparent than how we have executed traditional
12 acquisition programs by giving reports to Congress three
13 times a year and updating when we get outside the bounds of
14 what we have set for our guardrails.

15 I must shift the focus of this for just a moment based
16 on today's events. Today America lost a hero. Lieutenant
17 Colonel Dick Cole, the last Doolittle Raider, died at the
18 age of 103. Emblematic of what being an airman is all
19 about, he and the other Doolittle Raiders embarked on a
20 mission that they were told they may not return from. And
21 they did what airmen do. They went. Airmen like Lieutenant
22 Colonel Dick Cole are the foundation of our Air Force.

23 We look forward to working closely with the committee
24 to ensure the ability to deliver air power for America when
25 and where we are needed. Generals Fay, Robinson, and I look

1 forward to answering questions from the subcommittee this
2 afternoon. Thank you for your continued support of the
3 world's greatest air force.

4 [The prepared statement of General Bunch, General Fay,
5 and General Robinson follows:]

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1 Senator Cotton: General Fay, General Robinson, any
2 remarks?

3 General Fay: No, sir.

4 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

5 One issue on which both Senator King and I have worked
6 in the past is the shortage of pilots. Why do we not start,
7 General Robinson, there specifically on that shortage and
8 pilot retention efforts over the last couple years and where
9 we stand?

10 General Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Indeed, the Air Force has been focused on that very
12 problem, as you alluded to. Where we stand today is we are
13 increasing -- there are three parts to the equation. It is
14 producing pilots, seasoning or experiencing pilots to retain
15 the experience, and then retaining the experienced pilots to
16 the best that we can.

17 The area that we focus greatly on is the production,
18 and that is increasing our goal to get our pilot production
19 up to 1,480 pilots per year starting in fiscal year 2020.
20 This year the glide path still continues to increase. In
21 fiscal year 2019, we are on track to produce 1,211 pilots
22 and on track for fiscal year 2020 for that 1,480.

23 Senator King: Could you put those numbers in context?
24 What were we producing 2 or 3 years ago or 5 years ago, for
25 example?

1 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

2 2 or 3 years ago, we were down on the order of about
3 1,100 to 1,000, in that range, for production of pilots.
4 And of course, the production for us is active duty, guard,
5 reserve, as well as international allies and partners, and
6 we have a small fraction of pilot training slots set aside
7 for producing pilots for our able partners to do what we
8 need to do in our missions globally.

9 The other part we focused on is the retention
10 perspective. So we have done things to revitalize the
11 squadron much like General Goldfein has talked about where
12 we have reduced the administrative burden in the squadron by
13 putting contractors in the squadron to take some of that
14 burden off so that the pilots can focus on their primary
15 missions.

16 Senator Cotton: Can you be more exact by what you mean
17 by those administrative burdens?

18 General Robinson: We call those additional duties, so
19 things like, for example, you would have somebody who is a
20 mobility officer who tracks whether or not somebody is ready
21 to deploy and mobilization requirements are met, training
22 administration commander support staff, so looking at
23 performance reports and awards and decorations in the
24 administrative nature of the squadron. A lot of that has
25 fallen on the active duty members to do over the past few

1 years.

2 Senator Cotton: So basically any extra tasks besides
3 flying a high-performance aircraft and blowing up the bad
4 guys.

5 General Robinson: Yes, sir. So we have taken some of
6 that burden off.

7 The other thing we have done in terms of retention is
8 we have reduced the number of 365-day deployments. We cut
9 those significantly approximately in half, reduced those to
10 179 days or less, as well as increased the bonus. And we
11 have taken advantage of the authorities that Congress has
12 given us with regard to the aviation bonus as well. The
13 combat air forces last year were offered a \$35,000 bonus,
14 the highest year, and based on what we see coming forward
15 for mobility pilots in the next year or two, we are going to
16 increase them as well to \$35,000 a year.

17 Senator Cotton: In return for how many years of
18 service?

19 General Robinson: It can go out to 9 years. So there
20 is a scale that they can take to the maximum. And so what
21 we have done with that from that perspective is that has
22 arrested the decline particularly in the combat air forces
23 in terms of the bonus take rate. We have come up 1 percent-
24 - or actually 9 percent up to 44 percent. And the take
25 rate, retention rate, if you will, for the rest of the Air

1 Force is leveling off at 45 percent. Still short of our
2 goal of 65, but it has at least arrested the decline.

3 Senator Cotton: Will the Air Force ever be able to
4 match the compensation of what pilots can get in airlines or
5 in other private aviation jobs?

6 General Robinson: No, sir, I do not believe we can do
7 that. Those are substantial salaries.

8 Senator Cotton: Yes. I do not think we can either. I
9 do not think Senator King thinks we can either. We can pay
10 them well, and we can give them bonuses, which they deserve,
11 but ultimately they joined the Air Force to serve and to fly
12 those high-performance aircraft in defense of our nation.

13 General Robinson: Yes, sir.

14 Senator Cotton: And I am glad to hear that we are
15 focusing on making sure they have the time to do that as
16 opposed to being the admin duty clerk when they are back at
17 their squadron.

18 Another aspect of this problem is the RPA Get Well
19 Plan. Could you give us an update on where things stand
20 there?

21 General Robinson: Yes, sir. On the RPA Get Well Plan,
22 we are making quite a bit of headway there. In that
23 respect, we have achieved -- selected 87 aviators, if you
24 will, for the enlisted pilot portion of that out of the 100.
25 We are on track to make our 100 enlisted aviators this year

1 for the RQ4. Then we will continue to assess their
2 performance. Initial feedback is their performance is very,
3 very well, and they have handled a number of in-flight
4 emergencies, for example, flawlessly just like you would as
5 any other aircrew member that is trained properly to do that
6 job.

7 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

8 Senator King?

9 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 For the past 25 years or more, when the Air Force has
11 been presented with the option of buying additional fourth
12 generation aircraft, F-15's or F-16's, the Air Force has
13 always said no. We are going to wait for that fifth
14 generation aircraft. And yet, this budget includes \$1.8
15 billion to buy eight F-15's in 2020 and a total of \$7.9
16 billion over the FYDP to purchase a total of 80.

17 General Bunch, based on your personal and professional
18 judgment, is buying more F-15's a sound decision?

19 General Bunch: Sir, based on the situation we find
20 ourselves in, we need both fourth and fifth gen aircraft to
21 be able to execute our missions. We were counting on fourth
22 gen aircraft such as the F-15E, the F-16, the A-10, as well
23 as the F-15C to fly through the 2030s or deep into the
24 2030s. And our F-15C fleet is not going to make it.

25 Last year in our hearing, we talked about the cost of

1 trying to accomplish a service life extension program on the
2 platform, and that was something that we were going to have
3 to look at. We have now looked at that and what it takes to
4 modernize that capability up in an F-15C, and the
5 determination we made was that was not what we needed to do.
6 And we made the determination to buy F-15EX's so that we
7 could keep our readiness at a higher level and meet the
8 capacity need that we had for those fourth generation
9 platforms.

10 That is important from a readiness perspective because
11 the time to transition from an F-15C to an F-15EX we
12 estimate at 3 to 6 months, while the time to transition from
13 an F-15C to an F-35 could be anywhere from 18 to 36 months
14 and would require MILCON and other attributes that are not
15 in our budget.

16 Senator King: So essentially you see the continuation
17 of the F-16, F-15's as a gap filler as we transition to
18 F-35. Is that accurate?

19 General Bunch: It is sure, and what I want to make
20 sure -- and I should have started my statement with it. We
21 are not backing off any way, shape, or form the F-35
22 program. We are fully committed to the program. We need it
23 to serve as the quarterback as we try to penetrate anti-
24 access/area denial areas. It has an unbelievable suite, and
25 it is the only platform that can penetrate and do those

1 missions. We have to have that platform. This is about
2 filling a capacity need that our F-15C's are not going to be
3 available for.

4 Senator King: Do you have figures either today or
5 could you give me for the record the comparable operating
6 cost per hour of the two aircraft, the F-16 and the F-35?

7 General Bunch: Sir, you want F-16 or do you want
8 F-15EX?

9 Senator King: I am sorry. F-15EX.

10 General Bunch: So our current estimate right now is
11 roughly \$29,000 per hour. That is based on an estimate out
12 in the future for the F-15EX. And the estimate for the F-35
13 at that same time right now is \$44,000 per hour.

14 Senator King: So my question. How do we get the
15 sustainment cost for the F-35 down so that it is affordable
16 over time.

17 General Bunch: Sir, it is a big focus of the
18 Department. I will say it is something we are working with
19 Ms. Lord's team, the Honorable McMahon, with the JPO, and
20 with all the services to try to drive that down and with the
21 contractor. We have set a goal. I heard the chief in his
22 testimony last week say he wanted it under \$30,000 an hour.
23 We actually want it "25 by 25" is the phraseology we are
24 trying to use. I do not know that they can make that. What
25 we want them to do is try to drive those costs down. We are

1 trying to increase the amount of efforts that are going on
2 at the squadron level that we do not have to involve the
3 contractor with. We are trying to improve ALICE so the
4 performance is better so that we do not have to ship parts
5 back maybe that we do not need to, or we have a better
6 status of what is going on with the platform. We are trying
7 to stand up the organic depots quicker so that we can do the
8 work internally. So we have a multifaceted approach, as
9 well as identifying the components that are the high
10 failures ones and the high cost ones and putting action
11 plans together to attack those to get those into the field
12 in a timely manner to both drive down costs and increase
13 mission capable rates.

14 Senator King: I think you answered this in part in
15 your answer, but what are the elements of that per hour
16 cost?

17 General Bunch: Sir, this is one where there are a lot
18 of factors that play into it, and if you ask three people
19 about cost per flying hour, you got to really make sure you
20 are all talking about the exact specific things.

21 So what I will do is I will take it for the record and
22 give you exactly what we count in the dollar figure that we
23 have, but it is additional people that are supporting. It
24 is the spares. It is the parts. It is everything
25 associated with operating that aircraft, and I want to make

1 sure I give you the exact components that add up into it.

2 [The information referred to follows:]

3 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator King: Well, your answer was very
2 comprehensive. I take it from your answer there is a sense
3 of urgency about this because if we are going to buy 1,700
4 of these airplanes, we are not going to be able to do
5 anything but maintain them if we cannot bring that cost
6 down.

7 General Bunch: Sir, there is most definitely a sense
8 of urgency in the Department, and we are having regular
9 meetings to look at how we executing the action plan. And
10 we are focused on -- cost is a big factor, sir, but I need
11 the aircraft available and operating as well. So it is a
12 multi-pronged approach to get the most mission capability
13 and combat capability that we can.

14 Senator King: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Can I follow up?
15 I am a little over time.

16 In this calculation, there should be a calculation of
17 incremental warfighting capability that we are buying. If
18 we are paying more per hour, but the F-35 has capabilities
19 that its predecessors did not have, I do not know how to
20 calculate that dollars per lethality index. Do you see what
21 I am driving at?

22 General Bunch: I do understand what you are talking
23 about, sir. We will tell you today there are missions that
24 if you send a fourth gen and a fifth gen aircraft into the
25 mission, the fourth gen is going to die. So there are

1 missions that we absolutely --

2 Senator King: That is a high cost.

3 General Bunch: That is a high cost. That is what we
4 are looking at and the reason we are willing to pay more,
5 but we need to get it down lower so that we can sustain the
6 numbers that we have.

7 Senator King: Thank you.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Senator Cotton: One quick follow-up. Senator King
10 referred to this F-15/F-35 issue as a gap filler. And,
11 General Bunch, you stressed that the Air Force is not
12 backing off the F-35. Is part of the reason that we have
13 this gap now that we need to fill is that we did not acquire
14 the number of F-22's that the Air Force had planned to?

15 General Bunch: Sir, in the early 1990s, we planned to
16 buy well over 600 F-22's.

17 Senator Cotton: We did not quite make it to 600. Did
18 we?

19 General Bunch: We did not make it there, sir. 187.
20 And that caused our F-15C fleet to have to last longer and
21 go far beyond where we thought that would be flying in our
22 inventory.

23 Senator Cotton: So if there is any lesson to be
24 learned from what we face today, it is looking back to that
25 decision perhaps and playing it forward and saying we should

1 get as many of these F-35's as quickly as we can in large
2 numbers that we can.

3 General Bunch: So we do need to get them quickly, but
4 I also need to --

5 Senator Cotton: Senator Jones?

6 Senator Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 I hate to continue to follow up on the F-15 issue, but
8 as you can see, it is pretty important to folks. What I am
9 curious about is just logistically. If we purchase new
10 F-15's, are they going to be housed and based at bases
11 instead of F-35's? I mean, those have been designated. We
12 are putting them in place. Obviously, Dannelly Field has
13 been designated. Is that something we need to worry about?

14 General Bunch: Sir, we are buying F-15EX's to replace
15 the F-15C fleet. We will go through the strategic basing
16 process to determine where we do that. Why that is so
17 important for us is, as we understand it right now, 90
18 percent of the support equipment is the same for an F-15EX
19 as it is for an F-15C. 70 to 80 percent of the parts and
20 components are the same. I do not have to do MILCON. So
21 there are a lot of variables that play into that, but right
22 now, we are looking at the F-15EX's going to the bases that
23 we already have F-15's.

24 Senator Jones: Okay, great. Well, thank you for that.

25 The other thing that I -- there is an unfunded line

1 item for somewhere between 200 and 320 personnel to better
2 manage the military family housing programs at 63 bases.
3 Based on the information we have received not only at the
4 committee, but certainly in our personal offices, as well as
5 these two hearings that we have held, we all agree we got to
6 do something to improve the programs for military housing.
7 So I am really happy to see that we are trying to do it.

8 Would these additional personnel that you are talking
9 about be civilian or contractor, and what exactly would
10 these personnel do to improve the management of the housing
11 programs? General Fay, do you want to take that one?

12 General Fay: Sir, I think we are going to have to take
13 that one for the record. I know that our IE experts are the
14 ones working that issue right now. I know probably the most
15 important aspect they are working right now is the bill of
16 rights that we are working for all of our military tenants
17 on our military bases to make sure there is clear
18 understanding among all parties involved of what the
19 responsibilities and the rights are and how those
20 relationships work. But as far as exactly what is the
21 composition of those personnel, we will have to get you an
22 answer.

23 [The information referred to follows:]

24 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

25

1 Senator Jones: So you are just anticipating, which is
2 fine.

3 General Bunch: I cannot tell you exactly. I can tell
4 you it is a very -- taking care of our families and making
5 sure we have that right is very critical, and we are taking
6 the steps we need to get at that.

7 Senator Jones: Great. Well, I know that that is
8 somewhat of a work in progress, especially after all that
9 has come to light in the last few months. So all I would
10 ask is that -- you know, we have got two or three places in
11 Alabama that have had some issues, and if you would just
12 please stay in touch with us and keep us advised of the
13 progress on all those issues, I would very much appreciate
14 it.

15 General Bunch: Yes, sir.

16 Senator Jones: I will yield remainder of my time, Mr.
17 Chairman. Thank you.

18 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

19 Let us go to some bigger picture items and then maybe
20 we will turn back to some specific programmatic matters.

21 General Fay, the Department's overall budget request --
22 Department of Defense -- is still less than recommended --
23 the recommended level of funding growth by the National
24 Defense Strategy Commission. I understand that the Air
25 Force, like the other services, had to make some tough

1 choices. Can you tell us, given these constraints, where
2 you see the most risk in your Department's budget request?

3 General Fay: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

4 Essentially what we have seen and what we have heard
5 from some of the other folks that have testified is 3 to 5
6 percent is what we need to do to be able to modernize and
7 maintain the readiness of the force. 3 percent above
8 inflation is roughly what it takes to help us start getting
9 at the readiness issues that we have had, with 5 percent
10 roughly above inflation of about what it would take for us
11 to be able to get after the modernization.

12 And I think that kind of addresses where we are taking
13 the most risk in the Department. We are always in that
14 balance, if you will, between readiness, modernization, and
15 capacity. And I think we have already heard some of those
16 tensions in the testimony today. We are always working to
17 keep that force lethal and ready, which is number one
18 because we have to be ready to go to war tonight, ready to
19 fight tonight. And we are working very hard on recovering
20 readiness right now. I think you see that we have done a
21 great job with our pacing units, and we have knocked 6 years
22 off our readiness recovery in a number of those units. The
23 modernization is absolutely demanded based on the security
24 environment that we are operating on. We need to get after
25 fifth generation modernization, and we need B-21's, F-35's,

1 KC-46's to be able to ensure that we maintain our
2 superiority over our potential adversaries. At the same
3 time, we cannot shrink because we have a certain capacity
4 that is required to meet the demands of the warfighter and
5 to meet the demands required in the future. So all of those
6 tensions I would say is where we continually take risk in
7 our budget.

8 Senator Cotton: Looking to fiscal year 2020, last week
9 I had a similar conversation with the Secretary and the
10 Chief. Some of the testimony we have heard here we heard
11 last week was couched in terms of return to sequestration.
12 I think it is highly unlikely given what we have seen over
13 the last 6 years of stop and start budgeting practices and
14 getting 2-year agreements to lift the budget caps and then
15 pass spending bills.

16 I want to probe a little more deeply and you can go in
17 more detail perhaps than we were able to last week about a
18 different scenario, one that we have not seen but some in
19 Congress are starting to propose, which would be a full year
20 continuing resolution, the thinking by those proponents
21 being that, well, you know, the Department of Defense has
22 had 2 years of large top line budget increases and spending
23 bills that allow them to reset their priorities. So they
24 should be able to live with a full-year continuing
25 resolution.

1 Could you explain to the committee why that might pose
2 risk to the Air Force?

3 General Fay: So, Mr. Chairman, there is essentially a
4 significant impact on us if we are under a continuing
5 resolution. Essentially the two big impacts are we are not
6 able to do any sort of new start program and there are also
7 military construction impacts on us.

8 Specifically, if we were under a CR for approximately a
9 6-month period, there would be at least 16 new mission
10 MILCON projects that would not happen. There would be
11 another 18 military construction projects underway that
12 would not happen. We did a rough look, and if it was a
13 6-month CR, you would be looking at 89 programs that would
14 not be able to start. Those are things like our next
15 generation GPS. They are like F-22 modifications. They are
16 like F-35 modifications, very important required warfighter
17 requirements. Our readiness gains would begin to eek out,
18 and then we would also anticipate our desired growth of the
19 4,400 airmen that we were looking for in the 2020 budget
20 would not happen. So, sir, those are real specifics.

21 Now, sir, if it goes all the way to a year and we hit
22 sequestration, you heard the Secretary and the Chief testify
23 to the draconian impact that would have on us if we hit
24 those BCA caps. You are talking about things -- in rough
25 order of magnitude, \$29 billion, four times what we had

1 during the last sequester. Our entire military personnel
2 account is \$31 billion for an order of magnitude on how
3 gigantic that is. So we would have to do things like make a
4 decision to stop flying, not just a little, but all. Our
5 entire flying in our program is \$6.1 billion. Stop fixing
6 all of our aircraft. Our entire weapon systems sustainment
7 account is \$15 billion. All base operations, all airfield
8 operations, all munitions stop.

9 Or you could trade all science and technology, all
10 procurement on such things as B-21's, KC-46's, F-35's, next
11 generation air dominance, all of our space investment would
12 be gone, and all our fourth and fifth generation
13 modifications.

14 So if we get to BCA, sir, draconian, bad on CR, very
15 frustrating to get anything done and to advance the ball in
16 lethality and readiness, modernization, and doing things
17 faster and smarter.

18 Senator Cotton: Thank you, General Fay.

19 General Bunch, one final question along these lines.
20 Can you tell us why the Air Force UPL is more than a billion
21 dollars than it was last year despite the top line growth?

22 General Bunch: So, sir, thank you for that question.

23 We had not finished our Air Force We Need analysis when
24 we concluded our budget. So that was a factor that played
25 into it. And that analysis, of course, supported the fact

1 that we needed to get to 386 operational squadrons.

2 The unfunded priority list that the Chief provided
3 gives Congress the option to jump start us and accelerates
4 toward building to that Air Force we need by allowing us to
5 buy additional fighter and air refueling capability. Those
6 are two of the ones that must increase in the Air Force We
7 Need analysis.

8 The other part that is in our unfunded priority list is
9 \$579 million to recover readiness losses if we are unable to
10 get a supplemental to support Tyndall and Offutt. Right
11 now, we are cash flowing that so we can keep those efforts
12 going forward. We will have to take it out of somewhere,
13 and those will be readiness things we will not be able to
14 get at.

15 Senator Cotton: And that is a result of a stalled
16 disaster supplemental spending bill. Correct?

17 General Bunch: Yes, sir.

18 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

19 Senator King?

20 Senator King: Thank you.

21 If someone comes up to me on the street who is mildly
22 knowledgeable and says, what are we getting for this F-35,
23 this program has had a lot of overruns, it has taken a long
24 time, what do you the pilots think of it, and is it really
25 worth the extra money? Maine people are very practical.

1 That is a question I am liable to get.

2 General Fay: Ranking Member King, what I would do is I
3 would refer you to talk to the pilots that are flying the
4 aircraft and operating the aircraft. The results that we
5 are getting back from those that are operating the aircraft
6 is the aircraft is absolutely phenomenal, that it gives them
7 situational awareness that they do not. It allows them to
8 act as a quarterback for the rest of what I will say is the
9 traditional force. And what I mean by that is because the
10 F-35 has such phenomenal situational awareness and
11 understanding, they are able to share that with other
12 platforms that do not have the same ability that the F-35
13 has. So that makes them more lethal and more able to
14 operate in combat. We have seen just fantastic performances
15 coming out of high-end combat training exercises, our Red
16 Flags.

17 And I will give credit to the Marine Corps and refer
18 you to them. They have actually seen their first combat
19 deployment with the F-35B that they fly. And so we have
20 some feedback from them that would be appropriate for
21 another forum.

22 But overall what I would say is performance of the
23 aircraft, when it is operating, is really second to none.

24 Senator King: And this is from the pilots themselves.

25 General Fay: Sir, that is from the operators, the

1 pilots flying the airplanes, operating the aircraft, the
2 units that are prepared to employ them.

3 General Bunch: Sir, if I can add on that. Everything
4 that Tim just said is everything I am hearing not only from
5 them but from partners that are flying the aircraft. We are
6 hearing nothing but phenomenal things and about how it is so
7 much more situational awareness with that platform. They
8 are changing how they report defense things. I mean, it is
9 just completely different. It is a game-changer for
10 everybody involved.

11 The piece that I do want to kind of add into this is,
12 but we have to keep modernizing it to get after the threat.
13 We have funded the C2D2 effort to keep the software going.
14 We are doing things like adding the agile software
15 development to get capabilities out into the field quicker.
16 One of those, Auto GCAS -- we have pulled that to the left.
17 We think we will start fielding that this summer. The last
18 estimate I had was June. So we can get that. That is 4
19 years earlier than we had originally planned. But we got to
20 get at continuing to develop it and to continue to develop
21 those capabilities to get at where we see the threat coming
22 in 2025.

23 Senator King: And I take it that the underlying design
24 is built for modernization. We do not have to build a sixth
25 generation in order to upgrade the capabilities of the fifth

1 generation.

2 General Bunch: Sir, we need to invest in both. The
3 fifth gen is critical for what we are trying to do, and we
4 can continue it and it will be a part of what we do far out
5 into the future. But we also must continue to invest in
6 technologies that would take us to that next level as we see
7 those threats evolving.

8 Senator King: Well, my question is, is the F-35
9 designed in such a way that changes can be made
10 incrementally without fundamentally altering the platform?

11 General Bunch: I apologize, sir. I did not understand
12 your question.

13 Yes, we can. One of the upgrades we are going to do is
14 add more computing power to it so that it can do more things
15 in the future. We can incrementally add the software and we
16 have got a roadmap laid out for all of our partners and the
17 United States to go far out into the future for what we need
18 the platform to be able to do without changing any of the
19 outer mold lines or anything else.

20 Senator King: Let me change the subject. You are
21 using the 804 authorities in a variety of ways. I supported
22 those. Senator McCain certainly did. But you have a budget
23 request for the next generation overhead persistent
24 infrared, OPIR, at \$1.4 billion, replace the space-based
25 infrared, the SBIRS, and you are going to use 804 programs.

1 Given the history of the SBIRS, which was Nunn-McCurdy
2 breaches, long lead times, a lot of extra money, do you
3 really think that this project is suitable for 804
4 authority?

5 Here is why I am asking the question. I do not want a
6 disaster that undermines the political support for the 804
7 authority.

8 General Bunch: Sir, it is a fair question. When Dr.
9 Roper reviewed and we reviewed the program, we felt that it
10 was. We had a common bus that we could utilize. We were
11 trying to meet an urgent JROC requirement to have a
12 capability on orbit in 2025. That is what the program was
13 established to be able to go do. We are trying to pull it
14 left. And the team has gone through independent tech
15 assessments within the Air Force. The team has already got
16 contractors on contract to move forward to do the work.
17 They are already starting to do the risk reduction, and we
18 are already starting to design our prototype payloads. And
19 that is the real advantage of the 804 efforts is that we can
20 get the prototyping and doing some of that hardware stuff
21 before we would normally have been able to go through all
22 those acquisition processes.

23 Senator King: Well, you understand my concern.

24 General Bunch: Yes, sir.

25 Senator King: Do not screw it up.

1 [Laughter.]

2 General Bunch: Sir, the commitment that we have is
3 that we are utilizing the 804 authorities more than the
4 other services. Our words are "speed with discipline." We
5 need to be as good or better on the 804 programs as we are
6 on the traditional programs so that we do not lose the
7 confidence of the Congress that we can execute, and we must
8 be transparent with you when we run into issues.

9 Senator King: One final question on this subject. I
10 also serve on the Committee on Intelligence. A sort of dumb
11 question. Why is NRO not doing this? Why does the Air
12 Force have to design its own satellites when we have got a
13 whole agency that does nothing but design satellites?

14 General Bunch: Sir, I can take that one. I think we
15 do them both for different mission sets, and we work as
16 partners and we are actually working some where we are doing
17 the acquisition together to get at different mission areas.

18 Senator King: I would like you to give me an answer
19 for the record on that.

20 General Bunch: Yes, sir.

21 [The information referred to follows:]

22 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

23

24

25

1 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Senator Cotton: Senator Scott?

3 Senator Scott: First, thanks for your service. Thanks
4 for all your commitments to Florida. You got a lot of
5 assets in Florida.

6 Can you let me know where you think we are on
7 rebuilding Tyndall and then after that, talk about the
8 movement of the F-22's from Eglin?

9 General Fay: Sir, where I think we are on building at
10 Tyndall right now is -- I think you heard the testimony from
11 the Secretary last week -- is based on the fact that we have
12 not been able to get a supplemental, we are coming up to
13 some very difficult decisions that she is going to have to
14 make in the very near future about whether we can continue
15 with Tyndall's recovery or whether we are going to have to
16 pause.

17 Senator Scott: You just take it out of other --

18 General Fay: Sir, that is all we are doing is we are
19 cash flowing it from other accounts. So right now, there
20 are other projects in other States that are not being
21 accomplished because of what we are cash flowing and kind of
22 betting on with a supplemental to get us to that recovery
23 point with Tyndall.

24 And, sir, I would offer the same for Offutt Air Force
25 Base in Nebraska. We are in the same situation for both

1 bases.

2 Senator Scott: That was with the flooding just
3 recently?

4 General Fay: Yes, sir, the significant flooding that
5 hit them as well. So in addition to the very difficult time
6 we had at Tyndall with over 95 percent of our facilities
7 being damaged during that hurricane, we had a significant
8 amount of our base at Offutt under water here very recently.

9 Senator Scott: How hard is it going to be if we do not
10 get the disaster bill done? I do not think Offutt is even
11 in Senator Shelby's bill. Right?

12 General Fay: Sir, I cannot speak to what is in the
13 bill.

14 Senator Scott: I do not think it is because it
15 happened afterwards.

16 But take Tyndall as an example. What if you have to
17 stop and restart? Is that going to cost a lot more money?

18 General Fay: Sir, I cannot say for sure what it will
19 cost money-wise, but I can tell you it will cause
20 disruption. It will be difficult on mission. It will be
21 difficult on people, and certainly it is going to break some
22 things across the Air Force. And I believe the Secretary
23 has testified even further that if we are unable to get a
24 supplemental going further into the summer and then into the
25 fall, that she is going to have to make decisions that could

1 impact readiness and maintenance and flying as well. So
2 some very tough decisions for her or her successor are
3 coming if we are unable to do the supplemental.

4 Senator Scott: Do you want to explain the F-22
5 decision and the impact that will have on -- I know the
6 impact it will have on Florida, but just overall. What was
7 the thought process of that?

8 General Fay: Sir, I think what we can talk to on the
9 F-22 is -- and when we took a look at kind of looking at a
10 max effectiveness, a max efficiency laydown for the
11 airplane-- and I think the Government Accountability Office
12 also took a look at this about kind of what would that look
13 like so we could capitalize on things like our simulators,
14 our training ranges, maximizing our maintenance, and
15 recovering -- and certainly our low observable facilities
16 were an important consideration in that and some of the
17 other specialized equipment we need for the F-22 -- we kind
18 of took a look at a decision on where we could base those
19 based on what happened at Tyndall to maximize efficiency and
20 effectiveness.

21 Senator Scott: Is there a similar training range like
22 in the eastern Gulf? Is there a similar training range off
23 of Virginia's coast, or do they still have to go down to
24 Florida to do their training?

25 General Fay: Sir, I actually cannot answer that

1 question. I can take that for the record. I know there are
2 training ranges off the Virginia coast where our F-22's
3 execute and train every single day. I do not know whether
4 one is larger than the other.

5 But I will tell you that that range off the coast of
6 Florida is actually a very important range to us. "National
7 treasure" is the word we often use because we do a lot of
8 good tests there. That is a unique range for a lot of
9 reasons, and "national treasure" is the best terminology we
10 could call it.

11 Senator Scott: And is it important that we continue to
12 take the eastern Gulf off of any chance of doing any oil
13 drilling for the military?

14 General Fay: Sir, again, I cannot speak to oil
15 drilling. I would have to probably circle back for the
16 record on that as well.

17 General Bunch: So as a former test center commander
18 who the Eglin range fell under as the commander, that range
19 is a national treasure. There unique things we can do only
20 in that range with that water space and the ability to
21 freely operate. It is one that we would like to be
22 consulted on if a decision is made to change away from the
23 lines that are there. I would encourage us to be allowed to
24 be part of that conversation so that the overall impacts to
25 what we are doing from a test and training perspective are

1 considered as we make a final decision.

2 Senator Scott: Thank you.

3 Senator Cotton: Senator Blumenthal?

4 Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

5 I know there has been some fairly extensive discussion
6 of the F-35. I want to focus on a question that I think so
7 far has not been asked. My understanding is that the Air
8 Force is working with industry on a program called Adaptive
9 Engine Transition Program, AETP. You are familiar with it.
10 The goal is to develop a next generation engine for the Air
11 Force variant of the F-35 and other future fighter aircraft.
12 So we are implementing the F-35 and already thinking about
13 the next generation of engine, which is a good thing. And
14 Senator King has asked about the improvements that can be
15 made to the F-35 as it is produced. This area may be one.

16 The baseline improvement threshold for the fighter
17 aircraft airline is a 10 percent increase in thrust I
18 believe and a 25 percent increase in fuel efficiency. Once
19 fielded, this increased capability will have a cascading
20 positive impact, very importantly, that allows for longer
21 missions and greater standoff from threats for refueling
22 tankers.

23 So it is important that the Air Force gives industry
24 the clarity it needs for the future of this program to allow
25 for proper planning and investment in this vital next gen

1 technology. Being from the State where Pratt Whitney
2 produces engines, I am very interested in your thoughts
3 about the funding for this program because I understand it
4 is going to expire fairly soon. Am I right about that?

5 General Bunch: So, sir, I am not aware that it is
6 going to expire. So what I will say is it is a critical
7 program that goes to a new generation of engines to provide
8 the thrust that you discussed and much greater fuel
9 efficiency so we could go farther with the aircraft or we
10 could reduce the tanker footprint to support operations.
11 And it is one that as we have done it with the two
12 contractors that we have equally funded to go forward on the
13 program or we have funded to go on the program, that we are
14 doing mission analysis as to what the impacts of that is on
15 the overall force structure and whatever else it may change.

16 It is a program right now that we are in debate about
17 how we go forward on. That is a discussion that is going on
18 within the Air Force. Where we are right now is they are
19 building production representative engines and we are
20 running them in the tunnels for a great deal of time so that
21 we get the right data.

22 The other part we are looking at on those is looking at
23 whether we can scale those engines up or down so that we
24 could utilize them in other areas.

25 Senator Blumenthal: Utilize on other planes, other

1 type of aircraft?

2 General Bunch: Yes, sir, because if I can scale it up
3 or down and I get the same performance, then I may be able
4 to get other improvements. Now, that would take time to get
5 a production line set up because what we have been focused
6 on is building something that would go into an F-35 if we
7 wanted to go there.

8 So right now, it is a ground run, and we have got both
9 contractors funded to complete that. The Department is
10 looking at having further discussions about how we take or
11 what the next step we take forward is. But it is critical
12 technology that the companies are working on to keep us with
13 a tech advantage against our potential adversaries.

14 Senator Blumenthal: Does it have an expiration date?

15 General Bunch: Sir, I have had the team in and briefed
16 me within the last 2 months multiple times. I am not aware
17 that they are running at an expiration of funds, but I will
18 take it for the record to go back and I will get back to
19 you. If that is an issue, that is not one that I am aware
20 of at this time.

21 Senator Blumenthal: If you could, just let me know.

22 General Bunch: Yes, sir. We will make sure we get you
23 the right information.

24 [The information referred to follows:]

25 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

1 Senator Blumenthal: The other question I wanted to ask
2 in the brief time I have left is the personal protective
3 equipment and gear training for females in the Air Force.
4 The 2018 annual report issued by the Defense Advisory
5 Committee on Women in the Services, as you know, recommended
6 the Secretary of Defense require all of the services to
7 provide women in the Air Force and all the other services
8 with gender-appropriate properly fitting personal protective
9 equipment and gear for training and operational use.

10 When I asked the Army acquisition corps, Lieutenant
11 General Ostrowski about this issue, he said that the Army
12 has already made adjustments in its gear and its equipment
13 and other relevant body armor and so forth.

14 So perhaps you can describe for us what the state of
15 your work is on that issue.

16 General Robinson: Senator, thank you for that
17 question. I will take a first stab at answering that.

18 The truth of the matter is the Air Force has been very,
19 very focused on that. And our Human Performance Program
20 Office assessment has been looking at this for well over a
21 year. The focus so far has been on aircrew flight equipment
22 primarily, and we have looked at how do we produce more
23 aptly suited flight suits, survival gear, as well as
24 parachute restraining harnesses, and even ejection seats
25 that are more amenable to both genders in terms of comfort

1 and to reduce stress on the persons themselves.

2 We have also looked a flight helmets, aircrew flight
3 equipment and helmets, and make sure they fit appropriately
4 for the different skull sizes and the comfort factors there,
5 as well as different urinary devices, if you will, for those
6 long, extended over war to fight so that they can take care
7 of the biological needs as well, much in the same manner as
8 the male gender can.

9 The Vice Chief of Staff has recently asked us to focus
10 us on the defender force the security forces, to your point
11 about what we call battle rattle or body armor to make sure
12 that all the gear that they have to wear on the ground
13 forces and that role is also looked at. And he has actually
14 put us on task to take a good, hard look at that. And that
15 is just recently in the last about 3 weeks or so.

16 General Bunch: The other piece that I will add to
17 that, sir, because it is so important is we are increasing
18 our education and our communication to make sure that
19 everyone understands what is out there.

20 We are also increasing our training of our life support
21 technicians and everybody because that is not something that
22 they as up as we needed them to be. So we are changing
23 that.

24 The other one that we are doing, in an attempt to get
25 additional feedback, is we just recently funded the

1 development of an app that we can put out so that our female
2 aviators can give direct feedback to issues they want looked
3 at so that we can try to get at it more rapidly and
4 aggressively.

5 We had a group out at AFWERX within the last 2 months
6 where we had a big study and had brought a bunch of aviators
7 in to get at what problems we needed to be trying to tackle.

8 As General Robinson said, we are now focused on
9 defenders. We have got a team that is standing up right
10 now. And what we have done within the acquisition group,
11 within the acquisition team is we have designated a program
12 executive officer to be the lead for that. We have a lead
13 MAJCOM that is going to come forward this year with a POM
14 input, and we are trying to get at it so that we put the
15 right level of focus on that. And we are making sure that
16 it gets the appropriate funding is what the Chief has asked
17 us to do to ensure that it is looked at as the budget are
18 closed so that we are getting the proper amount of funding
19 into those areas.

20 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you very much.

21 Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

22 Senator Cotton: Senator King?

23 Senator King: A quick update on two projects. KC-46.

24 Where are we with the debris problem, with who is paying for
25 what, and when are we going to be fielding these airplanes?

1 General Bunch: Sir, I will start with the thought. We
2 have not started accepting aircraft yet. We did stop, and
3 we are not accepting aircraft at this time. We are in the
4 discussions as to when that will start back up. We think
5 late this month, but I am not going to go to a specific
6 date. We have meetings with Boeing on a regular basis and
7 the Defense Contract Management Agency to make sure that we
8 are doing the right steps to measure performance. We have
9 asked for corrective action plans that go through what steps
10 are going to be taken to reduce that, and then we are going
11 to measure the success against that over time so that we
12 determine where we are at. We are actually opening up
13 sealed areas that were sealed before and doing further
14 inspections. We are seeing progress, but we are not ready
15 to start accepting aircraft yet. That is the first question
16 that I think you asked.

17 Senator King: Is Boeing being cooperative and
18 forthcoming on this process?

19 General Bunch: Boeing is being very cooperative and
20 very forthcoming with what we are doing into this area and
21 it is increasing their work to do these inspections. But
22 they readily admit they need to do this. And we are not
23 having any issues in that area whatsoever, sir.

24 Senator King: Good.

25 And finally, as I mentioned, Senator Cotton and I had a

1 briefing on the B-21 back in February. But what can you
2 tell us in an open setting about progress, whether you feel
3 the contract is being adequately monitored, progress is
4 being made? Are we on the right track, no surprises coming?

5 General Bunch: Sir, I am very confident in how the
6 program is proceeding at this time. We are still within our
7 acquisition thresholds and baselines. It is executing the
8 way we want. We got past critical design review. Our next
9 major milestone is first flight. We are using concepts
10 here.

11 You asked earlier about what are we doing to make sure
12 we stay on cost and how we do this for the longer term to
13 make sure we do not have problems. Open mission systems
14 that we have got is a standard in there, open architecture.
15 We are doing model-based systems engineering. We have
16 brought the warfighter in early to make sure we are getting
17 the right inputs in. We are, I will tell you, actively
18 managing the program from a senior leader perspective with
19 visits and dialogues with industry to ensure that we know
20 exactly where they are at on the program and what issues
21 they are having. And we are still making great progress,
22 sir. I am very comfortable with where we are at right now.

23 Senator King: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

1 I am glad that we touched on the B-21. We mentioned
2 earlier the F-22 and how we planned 600 and we ended up with
3 187. I think on the B-2 we planned 80 and ended up with 21.
4 Not good performance.

5 Senator King and I will probably continue to have those
6 classified settings, for your information, once a year, once
7 every 6 months to ensure the program is where we want it to
8 be. General Bunch, you look like you have a comment.

9 General Bunch: Sir, we welcome the opportunity to come
10 talk about the program with you or any of the staff.

11 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

12 Let me follow up on the KC-46. Actually before I do
13 that, let me just touch on another bomber for the old bomber
14 pilots.

15 So the Air Force is going to extend the life of the
16 B-52 out to the 2040s I believe. That is a pretty old
17 aircraft already. General Bunch, can you tell your airmen
18 that that aircraft is not older than you. Is it?

19 General Bunch: Sir, I actually got a note on that, and
20 I am afraid I am a little bit older than it.

21 Senator Cotton: Surely not. I know we have a lot of
22 Senators that are older than that airplane. Sorry.
23 Stepping on toes here.

24 [Laughter.]

25 Senator Cotton: But I would say if it ain't broke,

1 don't fix it. It still fills a lot of capability
2 requirements that we have.

3 But could you explain why the B-52 will be in use out
4 for another 20-plus years if the B-1 and B-2, much younger
5 aircraft, will not?

6 General Fay: Sir, the good news is I am actually
7 younger than the B-52.

8 Senator Cotton: Your airmen will be shocked to hear
9 that.

10 General Fay: I know. With the hair, I get that
11 sometimes, Mr. Chairman.

12 Senator Cotton: It is your airmen who probably gave
13 you that hair.

14 General Fay: Yes, sir. And as a B-52 guy, I can tell
15 you I absolutely love the airplane, a great airplane for
16 America.

17 Its modernization plan is on track. We have taken a
18 look at all the things that we need to modernize. The
19 engines are obviously something that folks are talking about
20 a lot right now as we move into that program aggressively to
21 make sure that we have got good engines on it that are fuel
22 efficient and easy to maintain and operate. We are also
23 going to replace the radar. We are doing some work on the
24 avionics to get them up to 21st century standards, and we
25 are also working on some of the weapons capability that the

1 airplane has to be able to employ with.

2 So overall, it is a pretty good refresh for the
3 airplane. And the service life of the airframe has got a
4 long ways to run. You said 2040, and we actually could say
5 2050 based on kind of where we think we are at now. I will
6 tell you that our maintainers are doing a fantastic job and
7 our sustainers, making sure that that airplane is in good
8 shape and able to operate.

9 At the end of the day, this is about combat capability
10 for the warfighter. Its capacity, its diversity, its range,
11 its payload are a unique combination that make us probably
12 have at least 75 of them in the fleet for a long time to
13 come.

14 Senator Cotton: And if Lieutenant General Fay were
15 Lieutenant Fay again today, you would be very excited about
16 continuing to fly the B-52?

17 General Fay: Sir, I would trade tomorrow my desk in
18 the Pentagon for the right seat of a B-52 any day of the
19 week.

20 Senator Cotton: Okay.

21 Back to what Senator King was talking about on the
22 KC-46. The buy was reduced this year by three. I believe
23 that was from 15 to 12. General Bunch, can you explain
24 that?

25 General Bunch: So it was, sir. We weighed it out. As

1 we got to the end, we got three additional last year from
2 Congress, and we thank you very much for that. What we got
3 ourselves in a situation here based on priorities and what
4 we needed. We took it for other higher priorities. We took
5 three out of the budget, and we did that in 2022 and 2023 as
6 well.

7 Senator Cotton: And either for General Bunch or
8 General Fay, let us talk about light attack. This is a saga
9 going back now over 10 years. It seemed like last year that
10 the Air Force was on the cusp of procuring a fleet of light
11 attack, and it appears this year it has been rescoped and
12 changed. Can we get an explanation of that and what is
13 going on?

14 General Fay: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank you for
15 the authorities that allowed us to do that because I think
16 what our Chief would tell you and I think what he has
17 testified to is the fact that we are able to do that
18 experiment, that we were able to move rapidly and move out
19 was exactly what we think the intent of the 804 authorities
20 was.

21 So we moved out on that with an eye on our allies' and
22 partners' line of effort and our National Defense Strategy.
23 We were looking for ways to include them in our counter
24 violent extremist organization fight globally. And this was
25 one of the ways we wanted to get after it. And I will say

1 that one of the good lessons learned that we took out of
2 that that we are applying today already is the network, the
3 fact that we are able to take those airplanes and with
4 technology that we can export to any partner or ally,
5 connect them in a way that makes them part of the network in
6 their country or to connect to the larger network, if you
7 will, in this counter violent extremist organization fight.
8 So that was one of the good things that we took our of our
9 experiment.

10 Where we are going with that, based on what we have
11 learned, is we are probably going to expand the scope of
12 that experiment a little bit. We are going to take a look
13 at some other potential platforms that we could use based on
14 the needs of a wide variety of allies and partners. We are
15 going to bring them under the tent, include them in the
16 experiment, as well as the United States Marine Corps. In
17 2022, we are set up to make a decision about if we want to
18 procure aircraft based on what we learn during that
19 experiment. So that is kind of our way forward.

20 Now, we are going to buy a small number of those
21 aircraft this year from the original experiment -- the two
22 different types of aircraft. And so we are looking at
23 taking those aircraft and putting them to use and, again,
24 extending the experiment, learning what we can working with
25 allies and partners to get after this.

1 Senator Cotton: Senator Blumenthal?

2 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 As a trial lawyer, I was taught never to ask a question
4 when you have no idea what the answer is going to be, but I
5 am going to do it.

6 The A-10. You know, there are advocates for the A-10.
7 You know who you are. And I would like to know from you
8 what is the replacement for the A-10 in terms of its
9 versatility in the kind of fights that we had in Afghanistan
10 and Iraq where troops on the ground need that kind of air
11 support in the midst of kinetic situations.

12 General Bunch: So, sir, let me start by telling you
13 what it is not. It is light attack. Two different
14 programs. Light attack in no way, shape, or form was ever
15 intended to be a replacement for the A-10. There are some
16 that have come out with that. They are two separate and
17 distinct. I want to be real clear that we are all good on
18 that.

19 The second part for that is right now we are not
20 planning on replacing the A-10 for an extended period of
21 time. We got a new wing contract that is in source
22 selection. We expect to award later this year. We are
23 going to have options to buy -- I am going to say it is up
24 to 112. I may not have the number exactly right, but well
25 over 100 based on how we see the force structure plan out

1 long-term.

2 Right now, we are in operational test on the F-35 doing
3 the comparative testing that Congress told us we needed to
4 do between the F-35 and the A-10. Any decisions we would
5 make on the A-10 we would not do till long after that, but
6 right now we are planning on flying them into the 2030s.

7 Senator Blumenthal: Planning on doing what?

8 General Bunch: Flying the A-10's out into the 2030s.
9 Yes, sir.

10 Senator Blumenthal: Well, I am going to read the first
11 sentence of your testimony on that. A-10 is an effective
12 close air support platform for the current counter violent
13 extremist organization fight. Does that mean we will not
14 have an aircraft performing that mission for the next how
15 many years?

16 General Bunch: So, sir, we can do that mission with a
17 lot of platforms. The A-10 is very efficient and effective
18 in that area, and that will be part of the considerations
19 that we would make before we would decide if we wanted to
20 change where we are going with our force structure, was how
21 would we meet that need. The Chief has been really clear.
22 We are 100 percent committed to close air support and what
23 we do with our troops. And we do it with a variety of
24 different platforms. The A-10 is very effective and it will
25 be something that we would consider. And I will stop there

1 so that the requirements guy can give you a better answer
2 than me.

3 General Fay: So, Senator, I just want to clarify your
4 question. If your question was are we going to continue to
5 use the A-10 in the counter violent extremist organization
6 fight, the answer is absolutely.

7 Senator Blumenthal: But you will continue using it for
8 that mission, but it is being phased out. Maybe I misheard
9 or misinterpreted your response.

10 General Bunch: Sir, I think I said we are going to fly
11 it through the 2030s before we do any reduction.

12 Senator Blumenthal: Are the numbers not diminishing in
13 terms of what you have available?

14 General Bunch: So because of the way the wing contract
15 and the timing of that, we will start grounding aircraft in
16 2021, but we will stay above the number of fighter aircraft
17 that Congress has told us we must. We will have to force
18 manage our force structure to meet the numbers. But the
19 part that we also will find out when we award this contract,
20 how quickly can we do this, how many are we going to have to
21 ground. But we will actively manage the fleet to make sure
22 that we meet our requirements for those units.

23 Senator Blumenthal: I understand. Thank you. Sorry
24 to be a bit dense there. Thank you.

25 Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

1 Senator Cotton: Gentlemen, thank you very much for
2 your appearance today and thanks for your service to nation.

3 This hearing is adjourned.

4 [Whereupon, at 4:08 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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