

## President Signs Appropriations Bill

President Obama signed into law HR 933, appropriations legislation that will fund the Defense Department and other government agencies through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Obama inked the bill on March 26—one day before the expiration date of the continuing budget resolution under which DOD has been operating, announced the White House.

HR 933 includes \$518.1 billion in baseline defense funding, \$87.2 billion for overseas contingency operations, and \$10.6 billion for military construction. It also provides some leeway for the services to reprogram funds across accounts to ease the stresses of budget sequestration.

## Clarke Becomes ANG Director

Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III officially became Air National Guard director during a ceremony at JB Andrews, Md., on March 22. He replaced Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt III, who retired earlier this year after more than 40 years in uniform.

"This is quite an honor and I am humbled at the opportunity to serve," said Clarke during the ceremony. "I've arrived in a time of budget turmoil and uncertainty, but I view this as a time of opportunity as well," he added.

Clarke previously commanded the Continental US NORAD Region-1st Air Force (Air Forces Northern) at Tyndall AFB, Fla., since August 2011.

"My commitment to you and the adjutants general is clear," he said to

the assembled Air Guardsmen. "We will do everything within our authority to ensure our airmen have clear policies, equipment, training, and resources to accomplish assigned missions" and that "we remain community-based, team-oriented, and experienced."

Prior to his ceremony, Clarke told a congressional oversight panel that he had three immediate priorities: to minimize the "dramatic toll" budget cutbacks are taking on the Air Guard's readiness and people; to work with the two other Air Force components to achieve an appropriate balance of forces; and to ensure all three Air Force components are "modernized concurrently" so they remain relevant and interoperable.

## 📷 screenshot



### Rodriguez Leads AFRICOM

Army Gen. David M. Rodriguez succeeded Army Gen. Carter F. Ham as head of US Africa Command during an April 5 ceremony at the command's headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany.

Ham, who had led the command since March 2011, plans to retire after 39 years in uniform—including two as an enlisted infantryman in the 82nd Airborne Division.

“Your inspired leadership has helped African nations realize the value of AFRICOM in fostering stability and hope on the continent,” said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in a letter read during the ceremony. “You devoted the whole of yourself to the United States Army and to the United States of America, and for that, we are grateful.”

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted that Ham assembled an international coalition to aid the people of Libya just days after assuming command. “From Tanzania to Senegal, Tunisia to Botswana, you’ve found new ways to deepen partnerships and to build capability,” said Dempsey.

Rodriguez, who previously served as commanding general of the United States Army Forces Command, is the third commander of AFRICOM since it stood up five years ago.

### Brennan Approved as CIA Director

The Senate confirmed the nomination of White House Counterterrorism Advisor John O. Brennan to be the next CIA director. The Senate voted 63-to-34.

With the vote, “the Senate has recognized in John the qualities I value so much—his determination to keep America safe, his commitment to working with Congress, his ability to build relationships with foreign partners, and his fidelity to the values that define us as a nation,” said President Obama in a statement following the March 7 vote.

Brennan, 57, will fill the CIA leadership post that has been vacant since David H. Petraeus stepped down last November. Michael J. Morell has been CIA acting director since then.

Brennan’s confirmation came one day after Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) staged a 13-hour filibuster to delay the vote. Paul wanted the White House to clarify whether the President has the authority to use a weaponized remotely piloted aircraft to kill an American on US soil when he or she is not engaged in combat.

### New Homeland Defense Strategy

The Defense Department recently released its Strategy for Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities,

the policy document that aims to position DOD to respond effectively and efficiently to threats to the US through 2020.

The 25-page document identifies two priority missions for DOD in the homeland: defend US territory from direct attack by state and nonstate actors; and provide assistance to domestic civil authorities in the event of natural or manmade disasters, potentially in response to a very significant or catastrophic event, according to the Pentagon’s March 22 release.

“This strategy emphasizes strengthening our partnerships with federal agencies like the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, with state and local governments, with the private sector, and with our Canadian and Mexican neighbors,” said Todd M. Rosenblum, acting assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and Americas’ security affairs. This will allow not only for “more comprehensive approaches to complex security challenges in the homeland” but also “efficiencies through collaboration and joint action,” he added.

### Second SBIRS Satellite Launched

The Air Force and its industry partners launched GEO-2, the second Space Based Infrared System satellite, into orbit



USAF photo by S/A Benjamin Wiseman

04.02.2013

*A1C Julius Smith gives the thumbs up to a B-52 preparing for takeoff at Andersen AFB, Guam. The Stratofortresses arrived on Guam on March 31, as part of US Pacific Command's continuous bomber presence mission. Smith is a crew chief with the 36th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, deployed from Minot AFB, N.D.*

## North Korea Increases Aggressive Behavior

In April, North Korea moved a midrange ballistic missile to a launch site on its eastern coast. South Korean defense officials said the missile has “intermediate range,” but is not capable of reaching the continental US, reported the Yonhap news agency.

This was the latest in a stream of aggressive rhetoric and actions from the communist state.

Korean Central News Agency, the official North Korean news agency, announced April 3 the regime would resume operations at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, which has been dormant since a 2007 diplomatic agreement. This announcement followed an April 1 meeting of the North Korean people’s assembly where the regime reiterated the importance of nuclear weapons to the nation’s military capabilities, reported the *Washington Post*.

Restarting the reactor is meant to ease the country’s electricity shortage and improve the “quality and quantity” of the nation’s nuclear forces, said KCNA. Asked about this development in a briefing, Pentagon spokesman George E. Little said the North Korean announcement contradicts Pyongyang’s commitments and violates its international obligations.

Experts who follow North Korea’s secretive nuclear activity said the country’s decision to restart the reactor is part of a long-term trend to increase the potency of its nuclear deterrent in order to exact concessions from South Korea and the US.

“This situation is, relatively speaking, one of the more dangerous crises” in recent memory, said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Monterey Institute’s Center for Nonproliferation Studies. Lewis said North Korea has taken a number of steps in the last two years to build up its nuclear capabilities, including the establishment of a strategic rocket forces command.

KGS NightWatch’s John F. McCreary, a retired long-time Pentagon intelligence analyst, told *Air Force Magazine* April 4 that North Korea’s midrange missile, dubbed the “Musudan,” is a variant of the Soviet SS-N-6 submarine-launched ballistic missile and has a 2,485-mile range—enough to hit Guam.

“The Musudan is based on a superb missile with arguably the best liquid-fueled engine ever designed,” McCreary said. “However, it cannot stay fueled for more than a few days safely.”

North Korea has never test launched a Musudan.

At a March 15 briefing, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced US intentions to spend nearly \$1 billion to deploy an additional 14 anti-missile interceptors to Alaska in the next four years in order to bolster the defense of the US homeland against a limited long-range ballistic missile attack from North Korea or Iran. This action comes amidst even more bellicose statements by North Korea following its success last December in orbiting a small satellite from a long-range rocket and its recent nuclear test.

Under the plan, the Defense Department will install these ground-based interceptors at Fort Greeley, Alaska, by the end of Fiscal 2017, bringing the total number of deployed GBIs to 44, when including those already in Alaska and California, said Hagel.

In April, the Pentagon announced it also would deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system to Guam in the coming weeks “as a precautionary move” to strengthen the US regional defense posture against North Korean ballistic missile threats.

—Marc V. Schanz

atop a United Launch Alliance Atlas V booster fired from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., on March 19.

“The entire team worked hand-in-hand to make this another successful launch for the Air Force and our nation,” said 45th Space Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Anthony J. Cotton, who oversees Cape Canaveral launch operations, in a news release. He added, “Our hats go off to them for all their hard work.”

The satellite separated from the Atlas V upper stage about 43 minutes after the

launch, which occurred at 5:21 p.m. Eastern Time, said service space acquisition officials in a separate news release. It then began a series of orbital maneuvers to propel itself to a geosynchronous Earth orbit. Once in its final orbit, engineers will deploy the satellite’s solar arrays and antennas and complete checkout and tests in preparation for operational use.

GEO-2 joins GEO-1, which reached orbit in May 2011, and two SBIRS payloads that reside on classified intelligence satellites. The SBIRS constellation is

designed to provide early warning of missile launches and other types of infrared surveillance information to the US military and Intelligence Community. The satellites will complement, and eventually replace, legacy Defense Support Program satellites.

## Iranian Jet Threatens Predator

An Iranian F-4 fighter unsuccessfully tried to intercept an unarmed American MQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft over international waters in the Persian Gulf, according to Pentagon Press Secretary George E. Little. The incident occurred March 12 when the Predator was conducting a routine surveillance flight and the Iranians sent the F-4 to intercept it.

“The closest point of approach between these aircraft was approximately 16 miles,” Little said. The Iranian jet broke off the pursuit after a verbal warning from two US military aircraft escorting the Predator. “All US aircraft remained over international waters at all times,” Little added.

Back in November, an Iranian Su-25 fired on a Predator that also was flying in international airspace above the Gulf, but missed. The US government said at the time these surveillance missions would continue.

## The Cyber Cold War

The US military’s computer networks are vulnerable to attack and the Defense Department’s reliance on “inherently insecure” information technology architectures to support them acts as “a magnet to US opponents,” reported the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board.

The 18-month study, conducted by a DSB task force, found that “the cyber threat is serious and that the United States cannot be confident” its critical IT systems would work “under attack from a sophisticated and well-resourced opponent.”

Already, DOD and its contractor base have “sustained staggering losses of system design information incorporating decades of combat knowledge and experience,” stated the report, which is dated January 2013 although the Pentagon only recently released it publicly.

The task force called for DOD to take the lead in increasing confidence in the IT systems utilized in the public and private sector in order to “decrease a would-be attacker’s confidence.”

One recommendation to mitigate the threat of a debilitating cyber attack, according to the study, is to segment a portion of conventional forces at “the highest level of cyber resiliency at an affordable cost” to serve as a “cyber-critical survivable mission” force, such as “20



USAF photo by A1C Omar Bernard

aircraft designated by tail number, out of a fleet of hundreds” of strike platforms.

### China Wants Espionage Rules

China’s Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi called for international “rules and cooperation” on Internet espionage issues, reported the *New York Times* in March. He also insisted that accusations of Chinese government involvement in recent hacking attacks on networks in the US and other western nations were part of an international smear campaign.

According to the newspaper, such remarks were China’s highest-level response yet to reports of the Chinese

military engaging in cyber espionage. Speaking at the National People’s Congress on March 9, Yang said that accusations that the Chinese government sanctions such cyber attacks were “built on shaky ground.” He said cyberspace should not be turned into a battlefield. Chinese officials have been asserting of late that China also is a victim of cyber attacks from the US, according to the March 10 newspaper report.

### WGS-5 Launch

The Air Force has scheduled the launch of WGS-5, the fifth Wideband Global SATCOM spacecraft, for May

***But Baby, It’s Cold Outside: Security forces airmen from JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, practice tactical maneuvers during Polar Force 13-3. The operational readiness exercise took place at Camp Bull in April and tested the airmen’s short-notice deployment capabilities.***

8. The 45th Space Wing, which oversees launch operations at Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., has placed the mission on the range schedule for that day, according to a March 29 release from Los Angeles AFB, Calif.

A United Launch Alliance Delta IV booster will carry WGS-5 into space, where it will join four other WGS assets already operating on orbit.

Prime contractor Boeing announced in February that WGS-5 had arrived in Titusville, Fla., for final processing prior to the launch.

The investigation into the off-nominal performance of a Delta IV carrying a GPS IIF navigational satellite last October is still progressing, but the Air Force has “approved processing this mission toward the May 8 launch date,” stated the release.

### Weighing Threats

Gen. C. Robert Kehler, commander of US Strategic Command, said in March the United States’ 30 ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California provide enough capability to defend against a “limited” ballistic missile attack from North Korea or Iran. However, he told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the US “is not in the most optimum posture” today to defend against an Iranian attack.

In response, SASC Ranking Member Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) said to Kehler,

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"I think, you're being a little too cautious, [or] not cautious enough here, when you say 'limited attack,' when our intelligence has shown us that Iran is going to have the capability and a delivery system by 2015."

Also on March 12, Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper told the Senate Intelligence Committee that "Iran continues to develop technical expertise in a number of areas, including uranium enrichment, nuclear reactors, and ballistic missiles, from which it could draw if it decided to build missile-deliverable weapons." Clapper also said he is "very concerned" with the "very belligerent" rhetoric coming from North Korea. "The rhetoric, while it is propaganda-laced, is also an indicator of their attitude and perhaps their intent," he said.

### UN Tightens North Korea Sanctions

North Korea threatened a "preemptive nuclear attack" against the US just prior to the UN Security Council unanimously

***We've Got an Italian Squeeze: At Zaragoza AB, Spain, Capt. Corydon Jerch exits his F-16. More than 250 airmen and 14 F-16s from Aviano AB, Italy, trained in Spain in March. Not only is range and airspace limited in Italy, but required annual training at Zaragoza gives the Aviano pilots a chance to build coalition partnerships.***

## Strategy, Opportunity, and the QDR

Maj. Gen. Steven L. Kwast, director of the Air Force's Quadrennial Defense Review, said in March the Pentagon will undertake the upcoming review at a unique time for the country and the Pentagon. The US is drawing down from Afghanistan, shifting assets to the Asia-Pacific region, and grappling with steep fiscal realities. Combined, these issues present an "opportunity to have a significant conversation" about the defense of the US and its interests, Kwast told defense reporters in Washington, D.C., on March 15.

This QDR will be the first one since the release of the Obama Administration's new defense strategic guidance in January 2012. As such, it serves as an "inflection point" for political leadership and military leaders to match up strategy with programmatic detail, Kwast said.

Kwast wants to see this QDR put more programmatic detail on the way forward on ideas such as AirSea Battle, the Joint Staff's Joint Operational Access Concept, and other initiatives for dealing with anti-access challenges. They represent the Defense Department's efforts "to codify the fact that we are still on this journey from a Cold War structure of military capability and shaping it into a structure that has more agility, resilience, and flexibility," he said.

The QDR also will take a "holistic approach" to addressing the ongoing debate over the proper Total Force mix, Kwast added. This will include marrying the recommendations of the Air Force's Total Force Task Force and the independent National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force that Congress established in the Fiscal 2013 Defense Authorization Act.

approving a resolution tightening sanctions against the communist nation in response to its February nuclear test. China and the US worked together to draft the resolution, wire services reported.

The measure targets North Korea's trade and banking, as well as travel by certain officials, stated a UN release. The resolution also demands that North Korea retract its announcement that it

USAF photo by A1C Matthew Loiz



### Operation Enduring Freedom—Afghanistan

#### Casualties

As of April 15, 2013, a total of 2,194 Americans had died in Operation Enduring Freedom. The total includes 2,191 troops and three Department of Defense civilians. Of these deaths, 1,728 were killed in action with the enemy, while 460 died in noncombat incidents.

There have been 18,404 troops wounded in action during OEF.

#### Airmen Train To Defend Against Insider Threats

Airmen deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, recently learned how to deal with an insider attack on base.

Coalition troops have been killed and wounded in attacks by rogue members of Afghan security forces who suddenly turned their guns on their coalition partners. These attacks are called “green on blue” incidents. Because of this lingering threat, security forces airmen at Bagram trained other airmen assigned to the base on how to defend against such attacks, stated a March 21 news release.

“The goal is to get them familiar with firing from different positions in a high-stress scenario,” said TSgt. Steven Ely, a combat arms instructor with Bagram’s 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Group.

During the training, airmen are instructed to fire starting from a seated position and also while moving toward the attacker. “The airmen need to be either shooting or reloading and not waiting to be targets,” said SSgt. Zachary Regan, another instructor.

#### Shindand Graduates New Crop of Afghan Aircraft Maintainers

Members of the Afghan Air Force, alongside advisors from the NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan, welcomed 29 newly trained Afghan aircraft maintenance specialists in a graduation ceremony at Shindand AB, Afghanistan.

The class is the largest in the history of the Shindand Air Wing Maintenance Group, according to a March 23 base press release. It’s also the group’s first class to graduate since September.

To earn the certificates of completion and their maintenance badges, the Afghan students were required to accomplish on-the-job training and demonstrate proficiency in basic maintenance tasks, such as preflight inspections, aircraft launch and recovery procedures, and lube and servicing inspections.

“We’ve been in training for a long time, and now we know we are able to move on to the next step,” said Lt. Col. Gul Ahmad, one of the Afghan airmen who graduated on March 19. “I’m honored to get my certificate and badge today. My badge is something that I can wear with pride and that will be with me forever,” he added.

#### New Air-drop System Tested

Members of the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, experimented with a new air-drop concept that’s designed to improve the accuracy and efficiency of airdrops.

Under the Single Pass Airdrop, or SPAid, concept, a remotely piloted aircraft releases a “drop sonde” at a prescribed point near the drop zone to collect weather data for the approaching transport aircraft, according to the base’s March news release.

During the March 18 experiment, the squadron’s C-130 successfully received the sonde data; however no actual airdrop was attempted, stated the release. Use of the sonde to help build the wind profile will help the aircrews “drop as accurately as possible,” said Capt. Andrew Standeford, 774th EAS precision air-drop system operator.

Dropping the sonde from a different platform means the transport airplane no longer has to make two passes over the drop zone, thereby decreasing its exposure to threats, according to the release.

SPAid also allows for quicker delivery time. “The way we did it today took 40 minutes off the [normal] time frame,” said SSgt. Robert Olson, a joint terminal attack controller with the 817th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron.

Air Mobility Command sponsored the SPAid experiment.

would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and “abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.”

“The Security Council has sent an unequivocal message to [North Korea] that the international community will not tolerate its pursuit of nuclear weapons and related acts,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

“Adoption of the resolution itself is not enough,” said China’s UN Ambassador Li Baodong. “We want to see full implementation of the resolution.”

President Obama said in his State of the Union speech in February that the US would strengthen its missile defenses and “lead the world in taking firm action” in response to North Korea’s provocations.

#### Nellis Receives Its First F-35s

The first two F-35A strike fighters assigned to Nellis AFB, Nev., arrived in early March, announced base officials.

The airplanes, which will serve as developmental and operational test assets, touched down at Nellis on March 6, according to a base release. They will fly with the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron, which will be the first unit to conduct F-35 operational testing.

Nellis’ F-35A test force is scheduled to grow 12 aircraft, and the base’s Fighter Weapons School is slated to build up to a fleet of 24 F-35As.

#### Boosting Africa, Europe Partnerships

Army Gen. Carter F. Ham, then commander of US Africa Command, and Adm. James G. Stavridis, commander of US European Command, told lawmakers in March that the National Guard’s State Partnership Program offers the US the “maximum bang” for the buck in their respective areas of responsibility.

Already there are eight such partnerships throughout Africa, but none are yet established with partner nations along the African east coast, Ham said in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on March 15.

However, that could change shortly, he added. “We’ve had discussions with some East African countries and I think we’re close to having a few more [partnerships],” he said. In fact, the National Guard Bureau chief already is working with state adjutants general to determine what Guard units could potentially take on new partnerships, Ham said.

It’s also likely that dual partnerships between a Guard unit and counterparts in both Africa and Europe could increase in the future, said both officials. Stavridis, at the same hearing, called the Guard partnerships “one of the best things going.”

## Senior Staff Changes

**PROMOTIONS: To Lieutenant General:** John E. Hyten, Tod D. Wolters.

**NOMINATIONS: To be Lieutenant General:** Michelle D. Johnson, Robert P. Otto, Mark O. Schissler. **To be Major General:** Scott W. Jansson.

**CHANGES:** Maj. Gen. Brian T. Bishop, from DCS, UN Command & US Forces Korea, PACOM, US Army Garrison Yongsan, South Korea, to Cmdr., Spaatz Center for Officer Education, & Commandant, Air War College, AU, AETC, Maxwell AFB, Ala. ... Brig. Gen. Jack L. Briggs II, from Dep. Cmdr., Canadian NORAD & Dep. Cmdr., Ops., 1st Air Div., NORAD, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, to Vice Cmdr., 1st Air Force (Air Forces Northern), ACC, Tyndall AFB, Fla. ... Brig. Gen. Peter E. Gersten, from Dir., Plans & Prgms., ACC, JB Langley-Eustis, Va., to Dep. Dir., Politico-Mil. Affairs, Western Hemisphere, Jt. Staff, Pentagon ... Maj. Gen. Scott M. Hanson, from Cmdr., Spaatz Center for Officer Education, & Commandant, Air War College, AETC, AU, Maxwell AFB, Ala., to Dir., Ops., AMC, Scott AFB, Ill. ... Lt. Gen. Susan J. Helms, from Cmdr., 14th AF (Air Forces Strategic), AFSPC, Vandenberg AFB, Calif., to Vice Cmdr., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo. ... Lt. Gen. John E. Hyten, from Vice Cmdr., AFSPC, Peterson AFB, Colo., to Cmdr., 14th AF (Air Forces Strategic), AFSPC, Vandenberg AFB, Calif. ... Maj. Gen. Randy A. Kee, from Dep. Dir., Politico-Mil. Affairs, Western Hemisphere, Jt. Staff, Pentagon, to Dir., Plans & Policy, EUCOM, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany ... Maj. Gen. (sel.) Jerry P. Martinez, from Dir., Jt. Integration, Operational Capability Rqmts., DCS, Ops., Plans, & Rqmts., USAF, Pentagon, to DCS, Ops., Jt. Forces Command, NATO, Brunssum, Netherlands ... Lt. Gen. Tod D. Wolters, from Dir., LL, OSAF, Pentagon, to Cmdr., 12th AF (Air Forces Southern), ACC, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

**SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE CHANGES:** Thomas F. Christian, to Assoc. Dep. Asst. Secy., Science, Tech., & Engineering, Office of the Asst. SECAF, Acq., Pentagon ... Gail P. Forest, to Dir., Info. Dominance Prgms., Office of the Asst. SECAF, Acq., Pentagon ... Arthur G. Hatcher Jr., to Dir., C4 Systems & Cyber Ops., AFGSC, Barksdale AFB, La. ... Matthew D. Mulhern, to Dep. Dir., AF Rapid Capabilities Office, Office of the Administrative Asst. to the SECAF, JB Anacostia-Bolling, D.C. ... Craig A. Smith, to Dep. General Counsel, Intel., Intl., & Mil. Affairs, Office of the AF General Counsel, Pentagon. ■

### Breedlove for SACEUR-EUCOM

President Obama announced his intent to nominate Gen. Philip M. Breedlove as the next Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and head of US European Command.

“For over three decades, General Breedlove has served with distinction in assignments at all levels of the US

Air Force and around the globe, from Washington to Germany, Italy, Spain, and South Korea,” Obama said in a March 28 statement.

Breedlove has been serving as commander of US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa at Ramstein AB, Germany, since July 2012. Prior to that, he was the Air Force’s vice chief of staff.

In his current roles, “Breedlove has established trust and deep relations with our NATO Allies and partners,” said Obama.

If the Senate confirms the nomination, Breedlove would succeed Adm. James G. Stavridis, who has been the commander of SACEUR and EUCOM since summer 2009, in the late spring, according to the statement.

Breedlove’s name surfaced in February as the potential nominee after Obama’s initial pick, Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, announced that he would retire from the military and step away from his nomination.

### Saudi F-15 Variant Makes First Flight

The Air Force and Boeing recently conducted the maiden test flight of the new F-15SA configuration the company is building for the Saudi Arabian Air Force, announced service officials. The flight, which took place on Feb. 20 at Boeing’s facility in St. Louis, met the test objectives, according to the Air Force’s March 15 news release.

“The successful first flight of the F-15SA is a tremendous milestone for the program,” said Lt. Gen. C. D. Moore II, commander of Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Boeing is supplying 84 new-build F-15SAs to the Royal Saudi Air Force and upgrading some 70 existing F-15s in the air arm’s fleet to the “SA” standard under a multibillion-dollar foreign military sale. F-15SA deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2015 and conclude by 2019, stated the news release. The F-15SA configuration includes features such as a fly-by-wire flight-control system, active electronically scanned array radar, and two additional weapon stations.

In related news, the Air Force on March 14 awarded Boeing a \$3.5 billion contract for work on the Saudi jets, according to the Pentagon’s announcement.

### Man-Portable Weapons on the Loose

“Many thousands” of the man-portable air defense systems and other weapons in the stockpiles of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi’s regime before its collapse “remain unaccounted for,” said Army Gen. Carter F. Ham, then commander of US Africa Command, in March.

“It’s very clear” these MANPADS and other weapons have spread in two directions: western Africa and the Middle East, Ham told the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 7.

“We thought initially that most would transit into northern Mali, and [we] certainly have seen significant evidence that that has been the case” as al Qaeda-affiliated groups and other terrorist

USAF photo by TSgt. Samuel Morse



**Smoke on the Water:** 366th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighters put out the flames during a fire-training exercise at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. Teams worked in unison to push the fire back without allowing it to reignite behind them.



**Checking Out the In and Out:** SrA. Joseph Farrell checks the cavernous interior of a C-17 at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Farrell is an electronic warfare systems journeyman assigned to the 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

organizations “are significantly better armed now than they were before,” he said. “What we didn’t see quite so quickly, but now believe certainly to be the case, is movement of weapons in the other direction, some of which we believe have ended up in Syria,” he added.

Ham said a State Department-led initiative to secure these weapons by buying them back has had “modest success.” Ham had led AFRICOM since March 2011. Army Gen. David M. Rodriguez succeeded him in April 2013.

**China Moves Up On Arms List**

China became the fifth-largest exporter of major conventional arms worldwide during the five-year period ending in 2012, displacing Britain from that spot, announced the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on March 18, citing new data on international arms transfers.

This marks the first time China has been in the top five since the end of the Cold War and the first time Britain has not been in the top five since at least 1950, stated the release.

“China’s rise has been driven primarily by large-scale arms acquisitions by Pakistan,” said Paul Holtom, director of SIPRI’s arms transfers program. “However, a number of recent deals indicate that China is establishing itself as a significant arms supplier to a growing number of important recipient states,” he added.

According to SIPRI, the top five suppliers from 2008 to 2012 were: the United States (30 percent of global arms exports), Russia (26 percent), Germany (seven percent), France (six percent), and China (five percent).

**Japan Contracts for Four F-35s**

Lockheed Martin received a \$40.2 million contract to procure the long-lead-time parts, materials, and components for Japan’s first four F-35 strike fighters, according to the Pentagon’s list of major contracts for March 25.

Japan is procuring some 42 F-35As—the Air Force’s conventional-takeoff variant—under a foreign military sale with the US formally announced by the Pentagon in April 2012.

Under the contract’s terms, Lockheed Martin is scheduled to complete the long-lead work in February 2014, stated the contract description. The company will

build Japan’s first four F-35As as part of the F-35’s eighth low-rate production lot.

**Kerry Confronts Iraq on Overflights**

Secretary of State John F. Kerry said he “made it very clear” to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki in a face-to-face meeting that “overflights from Iran” of Iraqi territory en route to Syria are ruining Iraq’s credibility as a viable US partner.

Briefing reporters on March 24 during his visit to Baghdad—less than one week after the 10th anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom’s start—Kerry said he had a “very spirited discussion” with Maliki in which he emphasized that such overflights “are, in fact, helping to sustain” Syrian President Bashar al Assad’s regime, something the US considers “problematic.”

Kerry said he told Maliki that “there are members of Congress and people in America who increasingly are watching what Iraq is doing and wondering how it is that a partner in the efforts for democracy and a partner for whom Americans feel they have tried so hard to be helpful ... can be, in fact, doing something that makes it more difficult to achieve our common goals.”

Kerry also said he remained hopeful the two countries would “be able to make some progress on this.”

**USAF Announces Lift Decisions**

Air Force Reserve Command’s 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh will retain a force of eight C-130Hs through Fiscal 2014, announced Air Force officials in a March 13 report. The move is intended to meet the congressional mandate to maintain a force of at least 358 intratheater transports in Fiscal 2013 by retaining 32 addi-



**Step Right Up To See the Strong Man:** SSgt. Travis Miller gives a pallet of supplies a strong heave-ho, aided by rollers in the C-17’s floor. Miller and other loadmasters were preparing the transport to airdrop cargo over Afghanistan. Miller is deployed from the 15th Airlift Squadron, JB Charleston, S.C.

tional airplanes—all legacy C-130s—the service had originally intended to retire.

“Although we were required to retain aircraft only through the end of this fiscal year, we extended the aircraft through [Fiscal] 2014 to allow time to complete additional analysis and to coordinate with our stakeholders,” said Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley.

The Air Force will reassess its force structure as it builds its Fiscal 2015 budget proposal, stated the press release. In addition to Pittsburgh, which was set to lose its C-130 flying mission, the Air National Guard’s 109th AW in Schenectady, N.Y., and the 139th AW in St. Joseph, Mo., each will retain two extra C-130s as backup assets through Fiscal 2014.

The following ANG units also will keep one extra C-130 each in backup status: 123rd AW in Louisville, Ky.; 130th AW in Charleston, W.Va.; and 189th AW at Little Rock AFB, Ark. Air Force Reserve Command’s 440th AW at Pope Field, N.C.; 910th AW at Youngstown ARS, Ohio; and 914th AW at Niagara Falls ARS, N.Y., also each will retain backup C-130s.

In Fiscal 2014, the Air Force said it would restore AFRC’s 934th AW in Minneapolis as well as its eight C-130s.

#### Tuition Assistance Is Back

The full-year defense appropriations bill, which funds the Defense Department and other federal agencies for the remainder of the Fiscal Year, forced the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps to reinstate their perspective tuition assistance programs.

In mid-March, the Air Force, along with other services, suspended military tuition assistance for the remainder of Fiscal 2013.

The suspension would have had an impact on some 115,000 airmen taking

277,000 courses at 1,200 colleges and universities around the US, Lt. Gen. Darrell D. Jones, deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel, and services, told lawmakers when he testified before the House Armed Services Committee’s military personnel panel.

Congress added the tuition assistance provision to HR 933, which President Obama signed into law on March 26, after troops and veterans organizations protested the temporary end of the education benefit.

#### Healthy Base Initiative Launched

The Defense Department announced in March the Healthy Base Initiative, a one-year demonstration project to gauge the ability of a test set of DOD installations to create environments that can sustain healthy lifestyles.

“Our vision of success is an installation that provides an environment that makes healthy choices the easy choice and a place that encourages and promotes nutrition, an active lifestyle, and tobacco-free living,” said Charles E. Milam, acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, during a March 18 media roundtable.

The project begins in mid-June at 13 Pentagon installations worldwide. Among the pilot sites are the following Air Force locations: March ARB, Calif.; Mountain Home AFB, Idaho; JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; and Yokota AB, Japan.

Milam said HBI will be “cost neutral” as the aim is not to build new programs, but to invest time into reviewing existing infrastructures and initiatives to see what’s most successful. HBI is a component of Operation Live Well, a Pentagon initiative to increase the health and wellness of US military personnel, their family members, and DOD civilians.

#### Medal of Honor for Korean War Hero

President Obama awarded the late Capt. Emil J. Kapaun, a Roman Catholic priest who served as an Army chaplain during the Korean War, a posthumous Medal of Honor in mid-April. Kapaun’s nephew, Ray Kapaun, and family joined Obama at the White House for the April 11 ceremony, according to the White House’s report.

Kapaun was honored for his conspicuous gallantry while serving with the 1st Cavalry Division’s 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, during combat operations in Unsan, Korea, from Nov. 1 to 2, 1950.

When Chinese forces attacked his unit, Kapaun walked through withering enemy fire to provide comfort and medical aid to his comrades, stated the release. He elected to stay behind with the wounded when the able-bodied men were ordered to evacuate. As enemy forces approached, Kapaun noticed an injured Chinese officer amongst the wounded and convinced him to negotiate the safe surrender of the American forces.

Shortly after his capture, Kapaun pushed aside an enemy soldier preparing to execute a comrade, thus saving his life. Kapaun died in captivity on May 23, 1951, stated a March 11 Pentagon release. ■

***None Shall Pass: In Southwest Asia, A1C Travon Hicks, on the tarmac, provides overwatch during a base-defense exercise. This test determined how quickly security forces responded to intruders threatening USAF assets. Assigned to the 380th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, Hicks is deployed from JB Charleston, S.C.***



USAF photo by TSgt. Christina M. Sayer