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Air Force leaders discuss Nuclear Enterprise at summit

Bolling AFB, WASHINGTON – The Air Force's senior leaders met Thursday to move forward on proposals affecting structure, process, and cultural issues vital to improving stewardship of the AF the nuclear enterprise.

"A series of incidents and high level reviews on nuclear matters have brought many issues before us today," Acting Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley said. "We asked our mission partners who have common equities to share their expertise and help us with our way forward." Key internal AF leadership, Department of Defense and interagency mission partners (National Security Council, Department of Energy, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the RAND Corporation), discussed a range of initiatives as well as recommendations from the recent Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management, also referred to as the Schlesinger Report.

Summit attendees made decisions involving organization and management initiatives, inspection processes and sustainment. Final decisions on other issues are expected at the upcoming CORONA conference.

The following decisions were made:

- An expanded Nuclear Weapons Center (NWC) to be responsible for all nuclear sustainment, clearing up previously ambiguous chains of command; and NWC responsibility for all sustaining activities inside CONUS Weapon Storage Areas
- A stronger, more centralized inspection process built upon common policies and procedures effectively integrated with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)
- Consolidation and expansion of lead-in and follow-on, mission specific training within Air Education & Training Command for security personnel assigned to nuclear duties
- A new Headquarters Air Force (HAF) / A10 staff office, split out from the existing HAF/A3/5 office, to provide singular focus on nuclear matters in the Air Force headquarters

Phase I of the Schlesinger Panel's effort, a look at the AF nuclear enterprise, outlined 33 recommendations in the categories of leadership and culture, organization, and sustainment.

The Secretary of Defense commissioned the panel following the report by ADM Kirkland Donald regarding the shipment of sensitive missile components to Taiwan. Phase II will focus on the entire Department of Defense and is expected to be complete by the end of the year.