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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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

SUBJECT: Strategic Forces Programs in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for
Fiscal Year 2011 and the Future Years Defense Programs

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Nelson, Ranking Member Vitter, distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before the Senate today for the first time as the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Air Force's newest major command.

Today, I would like to provide a brief update the establishment of Global Strike Command; the enduring importance of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and long-range, nuclear-capable bomber to our national security; and the steps necessary to sustain and modernize these forces to ensure they remain safe, secure, and effective.

COMMAND UPDATE

Upon assuming office in summer 2008, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz launched a comprehensive, multi-faceted roadmap designed to restore a culture of compliance and rebuild the nuclear enterprise. Air Force Global Strike Command was established as a key part of this roadmap. This Command is a visible commitment to the nuclear enterprise, clearly aligning the ICBM and long-range, nuclear-capable bomber forces under a single chain-of-command, providing focused oversight and advocacy of the Air Force's nuclear forces.

The Command was founded on the premise that as important as other defense priorities may be, none are more important than the responsibility for operating, maintaining, securing and supporting nuclear weapons. For if there is one unchanging, immutable truth about this awesome capability, it is that it demands constant and undivided attention. This was true in the

past, it is true now, and it will be true in the future, regardless of the size or composition of the Nation's nuclear deterrence and global strike forces.

Last year, in a speech in Prague, Czech Republic, President Obama made this point perfectly clear. "Make no mistake," he said, "as long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies." The critical importance of this undertaking was again underscored in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, which states, "Until such time as the Administration's goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is achieved... [w]e will maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal to deter attack on the United States, and on our allies and partners."

This then is the fundamental mission of Air Force Global Strike Command -- to develop and provide safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrence and global strike forces both to deter attacks and assure our allies. It performs this mission with an elite, highly disciplined team of American Airmen with special trust and responsibility for the most powerful weapons in our Nation's arsenal.

Global Strike Command is being established in a methodical, step-by-step fashion. The first step was to stand-up a provisional command in January 2009, at Bolling Air Force Base, in Washington DC, under the leadership of then Brigadier General Jim Kowalski, now a two-star and the Vice Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command.

The next step took place on August 7th, when General Schwartz formally activated Air Force Global Strike Command in a ceremony at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, the site of the Command's permanent headquarters.

The first actual transfer of forces occurred on December 1st, when Air Force Global Strike Command assumed responsibility for the intercontinental ballistic missile mission from Air Force Space Command.

Under the new command arrangements, Twentieth Air Force, headquartered at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming and its three missile wings -- at F.E. Warren AFB, at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, and at Minot AFB, North Dakota -- now fall under Air Force Global Strike Command. On the same day, the Command also took charge of the ICBM test mission of the 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg AFB, California and the targeting analysis mission of the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron at Offutt AFB, Nebraska.

Just six weeks ago, on February 1st, the transfer of forces to Air Force Global Strike Command was completed as responsibility for Eighth Air Force and the long-range, nuclear-capable bomber mission was assumed from Air Combat Command. The Eighth Air Force is headquartered at Barksdale and exercises command over the two B-52 wings, one at Barksdale, the other at Minot, as well as the B-2 wing at Whiteman AFB, Missouri.

Since last year, significant changes have also taken place within these organizations as well. In August, Eighth Air Force's assets for cyberspace operations moved to the newly-established Twenty-fourth Air Force, headquartered in San Antonio, Texas. Then in October, the remaining "non-bomber" units of Eighth Air Force were transferred to Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces. The end-result is a leaner Eighth Air Force focused exclusively on the long-range, nuclear capable bomber force.

Additionally, in September, the Air Force reactivated the 69th Bomb Squadron to become the second operational B-52 squadron at Minot, thus mirroring Barksdale, which already had two operational B-52 squadrons. This move will help balance the workload between nuclear

deterrence and conventional missions -- not only at Minot, but across the entire B-52 force. The new operational squadron will ultimately bring ten additional B-52s and over 800 additional operations, maintenance and support personnel to Minot. The new people and jets have already begun to arrive in a phased deployment that will be complete by this spring.

Finally, Air Force Global Strike Command will achieve full operational capability in late summer 2010 with about 1,000 personnel on board at the headquarters and approximately 23,000 people in the entire Command. Of special note, the Command will be a fully integrated, "Total Force" team -- composed of active duty, Guard, Reserve, government civilians, and contractors.

AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND FORCES

The Minuteman III ICBMs as well as the nuclear-capable B-52 and B-2 bombers have been, and most importantly remain, essential components of the United States' armed forces. Each makes important and unique contributions to the security of the Nation, as well as the security of the Nation's allies and friends.

Of the three legs of the strategic nuclear triad, the ICBMs are the most responsive to national leadership. Continuously on alert and deployed in 450 widely dispersed locations, the size and characteristics of the overall Minuteman III force presents any potential adversary with an almost insurmountable challenge should they contemplate attacking the United States. Because an adversary cannot disarm the ICBM force without nearly exhausting their own forces in the process, and at the same time, leaving themselves vulnerable to sea-launched ballistic missiles and bombers, they have no incentive to strike in the first place. In this case, numbers do matter. The ICBM contributes immeasurably to both deterrence and stability in a crisis.

While the ICBM possesses unmatched responsiveness, both in terms of time-to-launch and time-to-target, the B-52 and B-2 bombers likewise possess significant and complementary capabilities and remain critically important components of the strategic nuclear triad. Their readiness levels can be visibly ratcheted up or down to demonstrate national intent. They can be dispersed to enhance their survivability. If ever launched toward their targets, they can be recalled should fast-breaking developments so dictate. They can also carry a comparatively large number of weapons with different capabilities. Bombers can avoid flying over sensitive areas in ways ballistic missiles may not be able to do. Just as the various components of the triad provide mutually reinforcing, complementary capabilities, so too do the two different bombers, with the B-52 providing unique, unmatched stand-off capabilities and the B-2 providing the capability to attack heavily defended targets.

Finally, both of these bombers possess vitally important conventional, or non-nuclear, capabilities, as they convincingly demonstrated in the opening phases of both Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. With ever-increasing capabilities to deliver highly precise and more effective munitions from bases in the United States or at forward deployed locations, the bomber offers important and unique capabilities to the Combatant Commander. While the creation of Global Strike Command clearly resulted from concerns related to the overall strength of the Air Force nuclear enterprise, the Command nevertheless takes the conventional role of the B-52 and the B-2 very seriously. To that end, Global Strike Command will continue to work very closely with Air Combat Command and the other members of the Combat Air Forces to continuously develop and refine weapons and tactics for employing the bombers in conventional operations.

SUSTAINMENT AND MODERNIZATION

As important as the ICBM and long-range, nuclear-capable bomber are to national security, they are aging weapon systems. The Minuteman III, first deployed in the 1970s, is now nearly 40 years old. Moreover, much of the infrastructure -- for example, missile silos, launch control centers, missile alert facilities, underground cables -- were fielded even earlier with previous generations of the Minuteman. The last B-52H left the factory in 1962. The newest B-52 is older than the pilots who fly it, and in some cases twice their age. The B-2, the Nation's most advanced bomber, is considerably newer; but, even it is now over 20 years old.

Nevertheless, the Minuteman III and both bombers still have significant life left in them and will be a part of the Air Force inventory for many years to come. But, as with any aging system, each weapon system faces chronic problems ranging from vanishing vendors for spare parts to worn-out handling and test equipment. Additionally, original design specifications in some cases limit the integration of modern communications and data processing capabilities. Accordingly, the Air Force Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Budget Request calls for increased funding to address sustainment and modernization, for both the missile and the bomber force.

With respect to the Minuteman III ICBM, the Air Force is currently in a multi-year program to refurbish or modernize practically every inch of the Minuteman III -- from the top of the nose cone to the bottom of the first stage nozzles. All three rocket motors have been overhauled with new propellant, the guidance system has been updated with new electronics, the propulsion system rocket engine (or post boost vehicle) is undergoing life extension, and the newer Peacekeeper ICBM reentry vehicles are being deployed on a portion of the Minuteman fleet. Meanwhile, other aspects of the weapon system have benefitted from substantial investment. To ensure connectivity with national command authorities, very low frequency

communications equipment has been updated and new equipment has been added to receive MILSTAR transmissions. Communications capabilities will be further expanded to take advantage of the Advanced Extremely High Frequency satellite upgrades. To enhance the survivability of the weapon system, the missile alert and launch facilities are being equipped with new environmental control systems, new diesel generators, new electrical panels, and new batteries. These measures will not only extend the service life of the missile system, but will also enhance its maintainability and reduce the cost of ownership.

Equally important, significant steps are being taken to enhance security in every facet of the ICBM system. Work was recently completed on reinforcing the concrete headworks at every launch facility, and progress continues on deploying a modified personnel access hatch designed to “button-up” a missile silo faster in case of emergency. Programs are underway to install security surveillance cameras at all the remote launch facility sites as well as all of the alert facilities.

However, significant work remains, particularly in the realm of nuclear support equipment. For example, every weapon deployed to the missile field requires a thorough checkout from the Reentry System Test Set, which is overdue for replacement. Without it, not a single missile can be placed on alert. Associated cabling, junction boxes, and replacement parts are equally critical to keeping missiles on alert. As such, it is a reminder that sustainment of test equipment, handling equipment, and transportation equipment are very important to the effectiveness of a weapon system. Hard work is being done to improve in this area, and through a concerted effort with the system program office, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, and the ICBM contractor team, this challenge will be overcome just as many others have been overcome over the years.

All these measures are designed to sustain the Minuteman III force through the year 2020. And, in response to Congressional direction, the Air Force is currently exploring the steps necessary to sustain the Minuteman III until 2030. Projections can and have been made about the potential service life of the motors and other hardware after undergoing the current upgrade programs; but, it's still too early to say with confidence just how long the Minuteman weapon system will be serviceable. The Air Force will continue to conduct a comprehensive program to inspect missile and reentry system components for signs of aging, and to perform periodic operational tests -- both in the missile field as well as unarmed test flights from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

The B-52 is also undergoing several programs in order to maintain its viability through 2040. Current initiatives include incorporating the 1760 data bus into the bomb bay to provide the capability to carry precision weapons internally. This upgrade will provide greater flexibility to the war-fighter by practically doubling the smart weapon carriage onboard the B-52. The Combat Network Communications Technology (or CONECT) acquisition program will support both nuclear and conventional operations by upgrading the B-52 fleet with tactical data link and voice communications capabilities. Efforts are also underway to enhance the aircraft's capability to communicate in a secure, protected mode as the Air Force's Advanced Extremely High Frequency Satellite comes on line. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has allocated \$3.3 million to conduct an Analysis of Alternative to replace the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM). This effort began last summer when the Air Force identified initial requirements to ensure the B-52 standoff weapons are viable beyond 2020. This is not the entire list, but it illustrates the range of B-52 programs underway.

As for the B-2, a new active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar is currently being fielded, and the B-2 is also beginning a modernization effort to improve the Defensive Management System on the aircraft. This will allow the B-2 to continue operations around the world in more advanced threat environments while decreasing the maintenance required to operate the system. Funding will also be increased for the Weapon System Support Center Software Integration Laboratory, which enables testing of current as well as developmental aircraft systems. New terminals will need to be installed on the aircraft to enable it to communicate in secure, protected modes via the Air Force's new Advanced Extremely High Frequency satellites -- a task made more challenging by its unique low observable (LO) requirements. Efforts are also underway to address the sustainability of aft decks and to improve the process for maintaining the aircraft's LO capability.

It is also worth noting that Air Force Global Strike Command has lead command responsibilities for the venerable UH-1N Huey helicopter that currently supports field operations and security at all three missile bases. While this helicopter remains a serviceable aircraft, and has been an undeniably reliable workhorse for the Air Force, thanks to the expertise and efforts of the Air Force's helicopter squadron leaders and contractor logistics support, the UH-1N fleet is aging and its ability to meet post 9/11 security requirements is constrained by cargo capacity, range and speed. It also lacks the necessary all-weather capability to support nuclear security response and convoy missions today.

The Air Force has initiated the acquisition process for replacement of aging UH-1N aircraft. On February 16, General Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, approved the Common Vertical Lift Support Platform (CVLSP) capabilities document stating the Joint Requirement Oversight Committee's priority is the rapid fielding of the CVLSP to meet

immediate warfighter needs. The next major milestone is for the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Global Strike Command, and the Air Force Materiel Command's Aeronautical Systems Center to present the acquisition strategy to senior Defense Department leadership for review as part of the Material Development Decision. This effort is driving toward a projected initial operation capability of six aircraft to missile wings in FY15. With this acquisition, the Air Force will be increasing both crew force and the number of aircraft that can successfully execute the mission anytime they are called upon.

CONCLUSION

The nuclear deterrence and global strike forces of the Air Force remain vitally important to the Nation, as well as to the United States' friends and allies around the world. For the men and women of Air Force Global Strike Command that means we have an extraordinarily important mission; noble and worthy work to perform; work that demands the utmost in professionalism, discipline, excellence, pride and esprit.

Everyone across America -- and the world -- should know and never doubt that the senior leadership of the Air Force is extremely proud of the Airmen who currently serve in Eighth and Twentieth Air Forces, and what they do every day. Indeed, our Airmen are doing truly magnificent work -- flying sorties and performing alert duties; keeping our bombers flying and our missiles ready; defending our flight lines and launch facilities; deploying to Southwest Asia and Guam; supporting our Airmen, their families and retirees; and caring for our wounded warriors. With every sortie, every alert tour, every shift, every post and every support activity -- they demonstrate over and over that they rank among the best and brightest Airmen who have ever served in the United States Air Force.

As Secretary of Defense Gates noted in his remarks to the bomber and missile personnel at Minot Air Force Base 15 months ago, “Handling nuclear weapons -- the most powerful and destructive instruments in the arsenal of freedom -- is a tremendous responsibility. We owe you the attention, the people, and the resources you need to do the job right...Yours is the most sensitive mission in the entire United States military.”

This new Command reflects the Air Force’s firm and unshakable conviction that strategic nuclear deterrence and global strike operations require a special trust and responsibility -- one that we take very seriously. Air Force Global Strike Command will serve as a single voice to maintain the high standards necessary in the stewardship of our Air Force’s strategic deterrent forces.

Thank you.