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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2012 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for Department of Energy Atomic Energy Defense Activities and Department of Defense Nuclear Forces Programs

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Nelson, Ranking Member Sessions, distinguished Members of the Sub-Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss your Air Force's strategic deterrent forces.

In pursuit of the President's vision as outlined in the Nuclear Posture Review to "reduce U.S. nuclear weapons and their role in U.S. national security strategy," the Air Force takes to heart its responsibility to uphold the entirety of his vision and pledge, "...[that] as long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure, and effective arsenal, both to deter potential adversaries and to assure U.S. allies and other security partners that they can count on America's security commitments." We employ that arsenal to produce strategic deterrence that remains vital at a time when our National Military Strategy notes, "...ongoing shifts in relative power and increasing interconnectedness in the international order indicate a strategic inflection point." Maintaining credibility of our strategic deterrent requires a long-term, visible commitment to our nuclear capabilities.

## **Continue to Strengthen – The Air Force's #1 Priority**

*Continuing to Strengthen* our nuclear enterprise remains the number one Air Force priority. A year ago, testimony before this committee recounted Air Force efforts to reinvigorate our nuclear enterprise. That focus significantly advanced our structure, processes and culture. Our focus now is on making sure those advances endure.

Since last year's testimony, Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), as the first major command stood up in 27 years, is the most visible structural change taken to ensure focused operational oversight and proper support to United States Strategic Command. AFGSC now has full operational command of our Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and nuclear-capable bomber forces and is continually focused on the Airmen and their weapon systems that produce strategic deterrence every day. Additionally, the Air Force designated Nuclear Deterrence Operations as one of twelve Service Core Functions to ensure alignment of policy and resources. These are just two of the many changes to structure, process and culture that reflect a concerted effort to institutionalize our reinvigoration initiatives and maintain safe, secure and effective nuclear capabilities.

The Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) and Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) articulated strategic guidance to ingrain the Air Forces' commitment to sustained focus on the nuclear enterprise.

- Strengthen Positive Inventory Control of Nuclear Weapons Related Materiel
- Refine Inspection Processes
- Fulfill Human Capital Plan to Ensure Appropriate Expertise at All Levels
- Modernize and Recapitalize Nuclear Deterrent Capability
- Implement New START

- Craft a Comprehensive Deterrence and Crisis Stability Vision that Builds on the Nuclear Posture Review

The initiatives in the President's Budget Request will build on successes achieved since 2008 and enable the Air Force to *Continue to Strengthen* along these Strategic Steps to maintain safe, secure and effective nuclear capabilities.

### **Strengthen Positive Inventory Control of Nuclear Weapons Related Materiel**

Efforts continue to tighten, assess and automate accountability for Nuclear Weapons Related Materiel through a completely revamped Positive Inventory Control process. To improve accountability, sustainment activities such as these have been consolidated under a vastly revitalized Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center. The Air Force now has improved visibility of our worldwide inventories and accountability continues to improve.

### **Refine Inspection Processes**

We have seen positive results from the current inspection regime across the board. We have reinforced our long-held nuclear standards and we will continue to examine the size and scope of the inspections required to "sustain" excellence, focusing on effectiveness. We will continue critical self-inspection, Nuclear Surety Staff Assistance Visits, and Nuclear Surety Inspections. The goal is to bolster resolute attitudes of exacting compliance and strict adherence to prescribed standards with continual self-assessment. We now perform Root Cause Analysis on all major write-ups, track them and brief progress of corrective actions to Air Force leadership. Senior Air Force leaders continue to review inspection results and other key indicators on a frequent and recurring basis.

### **Fulfill Human Capital plan to Ensure Appropriate Expertise at All Levels**

When the Air Force established reinvigoration of the Nuclear Enterprise as our top priority, we included our most precious resource....our Airmen....as an integral part of the effort.

In response, the nuclear and personnel communities jointly created an analytical process resulting in a comprehensive Nuclear Enterprise Human Capital Execution Plan. This action plan focuses on synchronizing the Air Force's *Continue to Strengthen* objectives that relate to development of Airmen and their nuclear expertise.

As a result of collaborative efforts across all nuclear specialties, we have instituted changes to improve the long-term professional fitness of our people. Over the past year, we have scrutinized our small, critical nuclear career fields, and recognized that in this era of small total force numbers and dual capability requirements, we must take innovative steps to optimally manage, grow, and retain this specialized expertise. As a result, several initiatives are now underway that will improve operational effectiveness in these critical areas. In addition, the Air Force is testing a new Enlisted Developmental Team process starting with the nuclear enterprise,

to ensure deliberate development of our senior non-commissioned officers to create a sustainable leadership bench. We have also moved out aggressively to retain nuclear talent, ramping up programs to target expertise and critical skills through retention incentives.

Recently, my organization was designated the Functional Authority for the Human Capital performing the Nuclear Deterrent Operations. As such, we are responsible for injecting strategic perspective in the array of nuclear-related human capital programs. This broadens the perspective of the human capital policy arm to the needs of the nuclear enterprise career fields, brings attention to some unintended consequences of broader policies, and allows for refinements in leveraging our skilled dual-capable nuclear Airmen.

These changes allow us to deliberately develop and manage our nuclear-capable personnel. Air Force senior leaders have energized these efforts through advocacy, continuous, focused attention and regular review of nuclear initiatives.

### **Modernize and Recapitalize Nuclear Deterrent Capability**

From investing in our people to investing in our systems, every weapon system in the nuclear enterprise is undergoing some form of modernization or recapitalization. Successful deterrence requires sustaining and modernizing our force structure in a consistent and deliberate manner. This is a vital contribution to the long-term credibility of our deterrent.

Air Force funding efforts maintain ongoing investment for the Minuteman III and support equipment programs to extend life expectancy through 2030, as directed by the 2010 NDAA. Ensuring consistent, adequate sustainment of MM III requires an investment strategy addressing cryptographic upgrades, ICBM fuze refurbishment, and modernizing data transfer technology. Additionally, the Air Force and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) plan to start a life extension program for the W78.

Although a decision on a follow-on ICBM is not needed for several years, the Nuclear Posture Review recognized the need for studies to inform a decision on Ground-Based Strategic Deterrence beyond 2030. In January 2011, AFGSC initiated study efforts appropriate to the early stages of the ICBM follow-on. Once these are complete, the study will move into a Materiel Solution Analysis (MSA) phase, which will include an Analysis of Alternatives (AoA). We plan to complete the MSA phase in fiscal year (FY) 14.

Air Force modernization plans for our current B-52s and B-2 bomber fleet continue an effort to maintain a viable force. The B-2 is the only aircraft capable of long-range delivery of direct attack munitions in an anti-access environment. To ensure the B-2 can continue to operate in high threat environments, we have programs to modernize communication, offensive, and defensive systems. For the B-52, we have programs to modernize and sustain the communication, radar, and weapon delivery systems.

Beyond modernization of existing platforms, we recognize the changing threat environment of the future requires improved capabilities. To meet that need, the Air Force is programming for a long range, nuclear capable, penetrating bomber. This program will leverage mature technologies and follow streamlined acquisition processes and focus on affordability with unit cost targets informing design trades and ensuring sufficient inventory. The program will begin in FY12 delivering an initial capability in the mid-2020s with a planned production of 80-100 bombers.

The Air Force will sustain the current Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) until a follow-on advanced penetrating long range stand off (LRSO) missile capability is fielded. We have multiple service life extension programs to ensure viability of the propulsion systems, guidance and flight control systems, and warhead arming components. Preparation activity began in Nov 2010. The AoA final report is due in May 2012. The Air Force has programmed for research, development, test and evaluation over the next five years for the development of LRSO.

The Air Force continues to program for a nuclear-capable F-35 to modernize the Dual-Capable Aircraft (DCA) fleet. The investment over the Future Year Defense Plan (FYDP) for F-35 DCA ensures effective transition of this capability from our legacy fleet.

The B61 Life Extension Program continues to be a top priority. The Air Force is committed, with the NNSA, to improve the safety and security of the B61 and ensure the Tail Kit Assembly acquisition schedule remains on track for an FY17 First Production Unit delivery. The B61 will remain compatible with current nuclear capable platforms to maintain effectiveness against projected target sets for years to come. This will also ensure the US retains the capability to forward-deploy non-strategic nuclear weapons in support of Alliance commitments.

The Air Force started the Common Vertical Lift Support Platform (CVLSP) program to address capability gap shortfalls in helicopter nuclear security support, and Continuity of Government (COG)/ Continuity of Operations (COOP) missions. The CVLSP Program seeks to replace existing UH-1N fleet with an off-the-shelf, non-developmental aircraft. We are currently evaluating acquisition strategies to best meet warfighter requirements with a goal of an FY15 Initial Operational Capability.

There are many other initiatives required to maintain a safe, secure, and effective arsenal. The Air Force will spend approximately \$1B over the FYDP in critical areas, such as Transporter Erector Hoists, Weapons Load Trailers, Electronic Systems Test Sets, Weapons Storage and Security System (WS3), and Reentry System Test Set cables. The Air Force also continues its commitment to maintaining its history of safe and secure resource transportation. To this end, AFGSC is actively programming to rapidly replace the current Payload-Transporter vehicle with a model with improved safety and security features.

## **Implement the Nuclear Posture Review & New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty**

During the next seven years, implementation of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and New START Treaty (NST) will bring a reduction in the role and numbers of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy. Under the NPR, the Air Force will remove multiple warheads from its ICBMs. Under NST, which entered into force on February 5, 2011, the United States and Russia will reduce the number of accountable strategic warheads from the current Moscow Treaty warhead limit of 2,200 to 1,550. Within the treaty's central limits on Strategic Delivery Vehicles (SDVs), the Air Force will reduce the numbers of deployed ICBMs and convert some nuclear-capable B52s to conventional-only capability. Final force structure will be based on meeting the combatant commander's requirements and maintaining overall effectiveness of the deterrent force. We are currently developing options to reach the force levels specified in the treaty and have initiated the appropriate planning, programming, logistics, engineering and environmental studies to support these decisions, inform Congress, and meet treaty obligations.

For its part, the Air Force began formal data exchanges with Russia in March. Inspections and exhibitions of bombers and missiles will start this month. The Air Force will also begin actions necessary to reduce deployed bombers and missiles, convert some nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to conventional-only capability, and eliminate other assets such as, Peacekeeper silos, 564<sup>th</sup> Missile Squadron silos, and B-52s to comply with central treaty limits. These actions must be completed by February 2018.

Global Strike Command will lead the Air Force portion of this effort. Lt Gen Kowalski and his team of dedicated professionals are finalizing implementation and compliance plans to ensure the safety and security of our nuclear force as we draw down to NST mandated levels, all the while preserving the ability to deter adversaries, and assure allies and partners.

In preparing for the new verification regime, the Air Force is also working closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and United States Strategic Command.

## **Craft a Comprehensive Deterrence and Crisis Stability Vision that Builds on the Nuclear Posture Review**

As we think about providing deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it's important to remember that not only is the Cold War over, the post-Cold War is over. Airmen who started active duty service after the fall of the Soviet Union are now retirement eligible. A generation has passed. That does not mean that strategic deterrence and nuclear forces are anachronisms. What it does mean is that we need to hit fast-forward on how we think about Nuclear Deterrence Operations in the complex security environment of today and tomorrow. The 2010 Joint Operational Environment declared: "For the past twenty years, Americans have largely ignored issues of deterrence and nuclear warfare. We no longer have that luxury." Successful strategic deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires stability-based analysis that goes beyond traditional numbers-based assessments to determine optimal deterrence force structure and posture. The Air Force is

revitalizing deterrence thinking to meet the challenges of our complex “multi-nodal” security environment.

### **Conclusion**

Our ability to enable other nations to achieve their security goals, serve as a convener to cooperatively address common security challenges, or lastly, act as a security guarantor, preferably with partners and allies, but alone if necessary, rests on a foundation of U.S. nuclear capabilities and the strategic deterrence they provide. Your Air Force is *Continuing to Strengthen* our strategic deterrent force. This will be a long-term, systematic effort to refine and solidify earlier “reinvigoration” initiatives and to codify institutional changes ensuring safe, secure, and effective nuclear capabilities for the Nation.

The President’s Budget Request reflects the positive steps we are taking to improve this Air Force core function. Across the FYDP, Air Force investment in Nuclear Deterrence Operations totals \$28 billion. The Air Force is committed to ensuring this investment results in systems and capabilities that best operationalize strategic deterrence for our Nation in the *multi-nodal* security environment we face.

The National Military Strategy acknowledges, “Our Nation’s security and prosperity are inseparable” and “Preventing wars is as important as winning them, and far less costly.” In this time of limited resources, the efficiency of Nuclear Deterrence Operations is evident in the fact that for approximately 3% of the Air Force Total Obligation Authority, your Air Force continues to deliver the bedrock of global strategic stability providing the ICBM and Bomber legs of the Triad as well as dual-capable fighter capability twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days a year.

Thank you for the committee’s continued support of America’s Air Force and particularly to its Airmen and their contributions to strategic deterrence.