NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
AIRLAND SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
AIRLAND SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE TACAIR PROGRAMS

COMBINED STATEMENTS OF:

Lieutenant General Mark D. Shackelford, Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ)

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JUNE 9, 2009

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Combined Statement of
Lt Gen Mark D. Shackelford (SAF/AQ)
Maj Gen Marke Gibson (AF/A3O)

I. Introduction

Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Thune, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for calling this hearing, and for the opportunity to provide you with an update on the Air Force Modernization efforts and other matters that are important to our Air Force and to the Nation. Your Air Force is fully engaged in operations across the globe, engaged in overseas contingency operations (OCO) and providing support to the Combatant Commanders to enable them to successfully execute their missions. As we prepare for the upcoming year, we will be assessing how the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget aligns with the standing operational requirements along with the upcoming needs of the entire Air Force. We frame our decisions and recommendations using the SECAF/CSAF top 5 priorities list to ensure we are aligned with the desires of our senior leadership. We understand your focus today is on the fourth priority, which is modernizing our air and space inventories, organizations and training. We are prepared to discuss our rapidly aging aircraft fleet that drives our urgent need to find a balance between the acquisition of new inventory and the ongoing effort of sustainment of our current fleet. We look forward to a discussion on how best to interlace the requirements and the available resources that have been allocated in order to execute the National Military Strategy.

II. Winning the Fight

When it comes to winning today's fight your Air Force is "*All In*." When we say "*All In,*" that covers a lot of ground. We, along with our sister Services, partner with the Joint and Coalition team to bring airpower wherever it is needed. The current operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa highlight over 18 consecutive years of planning, resourcing and executing combat missions. Since OCO began in 2001, your Air Force has flown over 80% of the Coalition's combat sorties in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). These missions provide the Joint and Coalition team with global airlift; aero-medical evacuation; air-refueling; command and control; close air support (CAS) to ground operations; strike; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and electronic warfare. We have flown over 385,000 mobility sorties dedicated to moving equipment and troops to and from the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR).

The total Air and Space effort takes its toll on our equipment and people as we continue to maintain the high operations tempo over time. We currently have over 208,000 Airmen contributing 24/7 to Combatant Command operations, including 35,800 Airmen who are deployed to locations worldwide. When adding in the non-combat operations including humanitarian relief missions both globally and at home, and the Air Sovereignty Alert (ASA) operations, the effects on the Air Force assets are tangible and measurable and are reflected in some of the problems we see in maintaining the current fleet. In direct support of the ASA mission, your Air Force has flown over 54,410 total sorties under Operation NOBLE EAGLE, including 39,390 fighter sorties, 11,290 air refueling sorties, and 1,826 airborne early warning

sorties. As a testament to the total force, the Air National Guard has flown more than 70% of these sorties and currently operates 16 of 18 Air Sovereignty Alert sites.

As we continue to accomplish our current mission sets and plan for future threats, we must remain mindful of the increasing age and costs of operating our air fleet. When approaching critical budget decisions, we face the same challenge of balancing between risk and operational necessity as we do when apportioning sorties. Our Air Force leadership is scrutinizing programs and budgets to find acceptable solutions to meet growing demands that are competing for limited amounts of funding.

III. Combat Air Forces (CAF) Restructure Plan

The Air Force intends to retire legacy fighters to fund a smaller and more capable force and redistribute savings for higher priority missions. Under the CAF restructuring plan, the Air Force will accelerate the retirement of approximately 250 aircraft, which includes 112 F-15s, 134 F-16s and 3 A-10s, over and above the five fighters previously scheduled for retirement in FY10. The CAF restructure will result in cost savings of $355M in FY10 and $3.5B over the next five fiscal years. The savings would fund advanced capability modifications to remaining fighters and bombers. Additionally, funds would go toward procuring munitions for joint warfighters, to include the small diameter bomb (SDB), hard-target weapons and the AIM-120D and AIM-9X missiles. Remaining funds would be dedicated to procuring or sustaining critical intelligence capabilities, such as the advanced targeting pod, as well as enabling technologies for tactical air controllers and special operations forces.

The CAF restructuring plan, which will require appropriate environmental analyses, would enable the Air Force to use reassignment and retraining programs to move approximately

4,000 manpower authorizations to emerging and priority missions such as manned and unmanned surveillance operations and nuclear deterrence operations. This realignment would include the expansion of MQ-1 Predator, MQ-9 Reaper and MC-12 aircrews; the addition of a fourth active-duty B-52 squadron; and the expansion of Distributed Common Ground System and information processing, exploitation and dissemination capabilities for continued combatant commander support in Afghanistan and Iraq, among other adjustments.

IV. Status of Combat Aircraft Acquisition

The following information provides updates on Air Force combat aircraft modernization:

A-10

The A-10 provides the Joint Force Commander lethal, precise, persistent, and responsive firepower for CAS and combat search and rescue (CSAR). It has performed superbly in OPERATIONS DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE (OAF), OEF and OIF. However, the age of the A-10 and high operations tempo have taken a toll on the fleet. In the Fall of 2006, the Air Force Fleet Viability Board (FVB) recommended that the Air Force upgrade 242 thin-skin center wing A-10 aircraft with thick-skinned wing replacements; this program is currently designing the new wing and installs will begin in FY11. Last fall, approximately 240 A-10s were grounded due to wing cracks. An inspect and repair program was implemented that has reduced the number still grounded to approximately 60; we anticipate these will all return to flying by the end of June 2009. Additionally, A-10 landing gear failures have resulted in a program for replacing failure-prone parts. The Air Force is currently upgrading 347 A-10s to the "C" configuration through the Precision Engagement (PE) modification and anticipates completion by the end of FY11. This modification enables J-Series weapons, such as Joint Direct Attack

Munitions (JDAM) and Wind Corrected Munitions Dispenser (WCMD); integrates a digital data link and advanced targeting pods with video downlink; replaces monochrome cockpit displays with color multi-function displays; installs new pilot throttle and stick controls; adds a moving map capability and a mass-memory upgrade; and doubles current DC power. Additionally, we have integrated beyond line of sight radios into the A-10 for faster communication with ground units, forward controllers, and C2 centers.

F-15 A-D

The average age of the F-15A-D fleet is over 25 years old and the average age of the F-15E fleet is over 16 years old. However, analysis suggests that Air Combat Command can manage the fleet through scheduled field/depot inspections under an individual aircraft tracking program.

The F-15A-D fleet has returned to flying status after engineering analysis confirmed they are safe for flight. Of the 407 aircraft in the inventory, only nine were grounded due to the longeron crack. The Air Force repaired five, and four were retired due to their proximity to planned retirement. The five aircraft were repaired in 2008 at a cost of approximately $235,000 each using organic materials and labor at Warner-Robins Air Logistics Center.

Based on the recommendation of Boeing and depot engineers, the Air Force has instituted recurring inspections of F-15 longerons every 400 flight hours to detect cracks before they become catastrophic. Analysis confirms that this interval is very conservative and will avoid a mishap such as the one that occurred on 2 November 2007. Additionally, the Air Force will conduct a full-scale fatigue test, aircraft teardown, and improved structural monitoring to help establish the maximum F-15 service life and more effectively manage structural health of the

fleet. We expect these efforts to successfully enable the 176 F-15C/D long-term "Golden Eagles" to operate safely and effectively through 2025.

F-15E

The F-15E fleet, which was not affected by the longeron crack, continues to provide support for on-going operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like the A-10, the F-15E performed superbly in operations DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE, OEF and OIF. The Air Force has been working hard to improve the F-15E's ability to rapidly engage and destroy time sensitive targets by adding secure radios and data links for faster communications with ground units and forward controllers; by integrating the latest precision weapons that not only hit a target accurately but are designed to reduce collateral damage; by adding a helmet mounted cueing system that will reduce the F-15E's time to engage a target by up to 80%; and by adding a state-of-the-art, Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA), radar system that not only addresses sustainment issues with the current system but will give the F-15E advanced capabilities to identify and engage targets, share real-time information with other aircraft, and protect itself from enemy threats. The Air Force plans for the F-15E to be an integral part of the Nation's force through at least 2035.

F-16

Our F-16s, the bulk of the fighter fleet, are undergoing a structural upgrade program to replace known life-limited structural components. Due to the use of more stressing mission profiles, this upgrade program is required to maintain the original design airframe life of 8,000 flight hours. Wing pylon rib corrosion, a known problem with the F-16 aircraft, is an issue we

monitor closely. This corrosion can prevent the F-16s from carrying pylon mounted external fuel tanks which limits their effective combat range. We currently inspect F-16 aircraft every 800 hours to monitor for this problem. In partnership with industry, the Air Force has recently developed and certified an effective repair allowing repair of affected aircraft at the unit in a single day instead of requiring a lengthy wing overhaul at the depot.

As of 15 May 2009, maintainers have repaired 41 wings at four units worldwide, restoring those aircraft to full mission capability. We will award a long term support contract within the next two months which will further enhance the ability of units to obtain repairs for their aircraft.

In other inspections, maintainers have found bulkhead cracks in approximately 37.5% (149 of 397) of our Block 40/42 F-16 aircraft. Eight-four aircraft have been repaired and five aircraft have had the bulkheads replaced with 19 more in progress. As of 12 May 2009, three Block 40/42 F-16 aircraft were in non-flying status awaiting bulkhead repair or replacement. An additional 57 aircraft continue to fly with increased inspection requirements to measure crack growth. We will continue to monitor this situation closely. Similarly to the F-15, the Air Force will start conducting a full-scale durability test for the F-16 in FY11 to help establish the maximum service life and more effectively manage structural health of the fleet. The Common Configuration Implementation Program (CCIP) is a top F-16 priority and will enable the maintenance of a single operational flight program configuration on the Block 40/42/50/52 F-16s. The Block 50/52 modification is complete and the Block 40/42 modification will be complete in FY10. It combines several modifications including a new mission computer, color displays, air-to-air interrogator (Block 50/52 only), Link-16, and Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing System. The F-16 is expected to be a capable element of the fighter force well into 2024.

Fifth Generation Fighters

Fifth generation fighters like the F-22A and the F-35 are key elements of our Nation's defense and ability for deterrence. As long as hostile Nations recognize that U.S. airpower can strike their vital centers with impunity, all other U.S. Government efforts are enhanced, which reduces the need for military confrontation. This is the timeless paradox of deterrence; the best way to avoid war is to demonstrate to your enemies, and potential enemies, that you have the ability, the will, and the resolve to defeat them.

Both the F-22A and the F-35 represent our latest generation of fighter aircraft. We need both aircraft to maintain the margin of superiority we have come to depend upon, the margin that has granted our forces in the air and on the ground freedom to maneuver and to attack. The F-22A and F-35 each possess unique, complementary, and essential capabilities that together provide the synergistic effects required to maintain that margin of superiority across the spectrum of conflict. The OSD-led 2006 QDR Joint Air Dominance study underscored that our Nation has a critical requirement to recapitalize TACAIR forces. Legacy 4th generation aircraft simply cannot survive to operate and achieve the effects necessary to win in an integrated, anti-access environment.

F-22A Future Capabilities & Modifications

The F-22A Raptor is the Air Force's primary air superiority fighter, providing unmatched capabilities for air supremacy, homeland defense and cruise missile defense for the Joint team. The multi-role F-22A's combination of speed, stealth, maneuverability and integrated avionics gives this remarkable aircraft the ability to gain access to, and survive in, high threat

environments. Its ability to find, fix, track, and target enemy air- and surface-based threats ensures air dominance and freedom of maneuver for all Joint forces.

Similar to every other aircraft in the U.S. inventory, there is a plan to regularly incorporate upgrades into the F-22A to ensure the Raptor remains the world's most dominant fighter in the decades to come. The F-22A modernization program consists of two major efforts that, together, will ensure every Raptor maintains its maximum combat capability: the Common Configuration program and a pre-planned product improvement (P3I) program (Increments 2 and 3). We are currently in year six of the planned 13-year program.

As of 1 May 2009, the Air Force has accepted 139 F-22A aircraft, out of a programmed delivery of 183. Most of these aircraft include the Increment 2 upgrade, which provides the ability to employ Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) at supersonic speeds and enhances the intra-flight data-link (IFDL) to provide connectivity with other F-22As. The Air Force will upgrade the F-22A fleet under the JROC-approved Increment 3 upgrade designed to enhance both air-to-air and precision ground attack capability. Raptors from the production line today are wired to accept Increment 3.1, which when equipped, upgrades the APG-77 AESA radar to enable synthetic aperture radar ground mapping capability, provides the ability to self-target JDAMs using on-board sensors, and allows F-22As to carry and employ eight SDBs. The Air Force will begin to field Increment 3.1 in FY11. Future F-22As will include the Increment 3.2 upgrade, which features the next generation data-link, improved SDB employment capability, improved targeting using multi-ship geo-location, automatic ground collision avoidance system (Auto GCAS) and the capability to employ our enhanced air-to-air weapons (AIM-120D and AIM-9X). Increment 3.2 should begin to field in FY15.

The current F-22A modernization plan will result in 34 Block 20 aircraft used for test and training, 63 combat-coded Block 30s fielded with Increment 3.1, 83 combat-coded Block 35s fielded with Increment 3.2, and 3 Edwards AFB-test coded aircraft. Consideration is also being given to upgrade the 63 Block 30s to the most capable Block 35 configuration.

F-22A Procurement Plans

The F-22A production program has delivered 22 "zero defects" aircraft to date and is currently delivering Lot 7 aircraft ahead of scheduled contract delivery dates at a rate of about two per month. Lot 7 Raptors are the first lot of the three-year multiyear procurement contract awarded in the summer of 2007. The Air Force completed F-22A deliveries to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska and we are currently underway with deliveries to Holloman AFB, New Mexico with expected completion in January 2011.

When the plant delivers the last Lot 9 aircraft in December 2011, we will have completed the program of 183 Raptors. The average unit cost for the 60 aircraft in the multiyear procurement was $142.6M. Should the Congress decide to fund the 4 additional Lot 10 Raptors in the Overseas Contingency Operations Supplemental Request, the unit flyaway cost without tail-up costs will be approximately $153.2M. The unit flyaway cost is estimated to be $10.6M higher due to higher material costs for a much smaller lot buy, loss of the multiyear procurement savings in parts and labor, inflation, and in-line incorporation of pre-planned product improvements, including SDB capability, ability to retarget JDAMs, and the ability to map ground targets with the synthetic aperture radar. This average does not include tail-up costs of $147M.

F-35

The F-35 program will develop and deploy a family of highly capable, affordable, fifth generation strike fighter aircraft to meet the operational needs of the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Allies with optimum commonality to minimize life cycle costs. The F-35 was designed from the bottom-up to be our premier surface-to-air missile killer and is uniquely equipped for this mission with cutting edge processing power, synthetic aperture radar integration techniques, and advanced target recognition. The F-35 also provides "leap ahead" capabilities in its resistance to jamming, maintainability, and logistic support. The F-35 is currently in the 8th year of a 13 year Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) phase.

The F-35 is projected to meet all Key Performance Parameters (KPP) and as of 10 May 2009, AA-1 has completed 84 test flights, including a deployment to Eglin AFB. The first system design and development (SDD) Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft, BF-1, has completed 14 flights. The second SDD STOVL aircraft, BF-2, had its first flight in February 2009. The Cooperative Avionics Test Bed (CAT-B) continues to provide unprecedented risk reduction at this stage in a major weapon system not seen in any legacy program. In December 2008, the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE) approved full funding for 7 Conventional Take-Off and Landing (CTOL) aircraft and engines, plus sustainment and associated equipment as part of the Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) Lot 3 acquisition decision memorandum. In addition, the DAE approved full funding for seven STOVL aircraft plus sustainment and associated equipment contingent upon successful completion of the F135 Pratt & Whitney lead engine Stress Test, Flight Test Engine 6 Proof Test and receipt of full STOVL flight clearance, which occurred on 30 January 2009. The FY10 President's Budget provided funding for 10 CTOL, 16 STOVL and 4 CV aircraft for Operational Test.

Joint Strike Fighter Alternative Engine Program

Presidential Budget 10, released earlier this month, did not fund the development and procurement of the alternative engine program for the Joint Strike Fighter. The Air Force and Navy are executing the funding appropriated by Congress in the 2009 budget to continue the F136 program.

The cost to continue F136 engine development is approximately $1.8B through FY15. In addition, the Department of Defense will have to fund the production of GE engines to get the suppliers on equal footing in the amount of approximately $2.8B. Continued funding for the F136 engine carries cost penalties to both F135 and F136 engines for reduced production line learning curves and inefficient economic order quantities. The department has concluded that maintaining a single engine supplier provides the best balance of cost and risk. Our belief is the risks associated with a single source engine supplier are manageable due to improvements in engine technology and do not outweigh the investment required to fund a competitive alternate engine.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

MQ-9A Reaper

The MQ-9 Reaper is a “Hunter-Killer” remotely piloted aircraft capable of automatic cueing and prosecuting critical, emerging time-sensitive targets with self-contained hard-kill capability. SDD for the first increment began in FY05 and additional SDD efforts are currently on-going. An interim combat capability aircraft deployed to CENTCOM in September 2007 and, even though not yet at IOC, more have continued to deploy. There are now 12 U.S. and two

United Kingdom MQ-9s supporting OEF operations. The MQ-9 has military-standard 1760-based stores management capability, an FAA-certified engine and GBU-12/AGM-114 Hellfire weapon capability now, and an anticipated 500-lb JDAM (GBU-38) capability in July 2009. As part of the FY10 President's Budget, the Air Force requests funding to procure 24 MQ-9A Reapers.

Missile Programs

Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-off Missile (JASSM)

The JASSM is the Nation's only stealthy, conventional, precision, launch-and-leave, stand-off missile capable of being launched from fighter and bomber aircraft. The JASSM achieved an initial operational capability on B-52, B-1, F-16 and B-2 and puts adversary's center-of-gravity targets at risk even if protected by next-generation air defense systems.

The Air Force postponed the JASSM FY09 production contract due to unsatisfactory flight tests of the Lot 5 JASSM production missiles. Of the 10 flight tests, we considered six to be complete successes. To address issues discovered during the JASSM test program to date, we are taking a pause in FY10 missile production in order to incorporate reliability improvements on Lot 6 missiles, and will conduct a 16 shot flight test in the late summer/early fall 2009 timeframe to verify JASSM is on track to achieve our established reliability goal of 90%. .

As part of the FY10 President's Budget, the Air Force is not requesting any funds for procurement of missiles, but rather is requesting procurement funds only to continue reliability and retrofit activities.

Legacy Bomber Fleet

The Air Force bomber fleet exemplifies how we continue to sustain and modernize legacy aircraft as they are passed from one generation of crew force to the next.

B-1

The B-1 provides the Joint Force Commander massive firepower potential coupled with a significant loiter capability perfectly suited for the inconsistent tempo of today's ongoing operations. Added to this is the B-1's unique supersonic dash potential which allows a single aircraft to perform as a roving linebacker over large portions of the overall AOR. Once solely a nuclear deterrent, the Air Force has re-focused the B-1's capabilities through modernizing its current conventional lethality.

A perfect example of the B-1's potential was realized by adding an Advanced Targeting Pod to the platform's sensor suite. In an exceptional display of acquisition effectiveness, in 2007 the Air Force and our corporate partners responded to AFCENT's highest Urgent Operational Need requirement by energizing a fast-track development and procurement timeline. With the help of supplemental funding, by June 2008 the 34th Bomb Squadron out of Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota was able to deploy a full complement of Sniper-equipped B-1 bombers to support both OEF and OIF operations without a single break in daily combat operations. The program continues in 2009 to outfit the remaining fleet and incorporate laser-guided weapons as well as integrating pod data directly into the avionics system, allowing for direct machine-to-machine transfer of targeting data. As stated by the Combined Force Air Component Commander, "The Sniper pod on the B-1 Bomber is amazing."

This new capability means the B-1 is even more in demand for current operational taskings. The non-stop overseas contingency operations are taking a toll on the overall fleet.

Currently in FY09, the Air Force is addressing five different issues which would have meant potentially grounding aircraft if they were not addressed. As a baseline to many of these sustainment modifications, the Air Force also embarked on its largest cockpit and communications modernization for the B-1 since its inception. Begun in 2005, the B-1 Fully Integrated Data Link (FIDL) program infuses a tactical Link-16 data link and a Joint Range Extension (JRE) Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) data link into an entirely overhauled modern cockpit. This system of modifications removes legacy monochrome displays and incorporates a series of color multifunction displays capable of displaying a wide array of fused data at all crew stations. Although the B-1 FIDL program has suffered several setbacks, through the continued persistence of Air Force and Congressional support the program is now turning the corner and progressing toward completion. This upgrade will not only help protect the B-1 parts from obsolescence, it will evolve an already capable conventional platform into a networked provider of precision firepower.

B-2

The B-2 Spirit Advanced Technology Bomber provides a lethal combination of stealth, range, payload, and precision engagement. The B-2 remains the world's sole long-range, low observable bomber, and the only platform capable of delivering 80 independently targeted GBU-38s.

B-2 availability has steadily increased over the past five years, due in large part to focused efforts to enhance low observable maintenance such as the highly successful Alternate High Frequency Material program. However, it still faces increasing pressures to upgrade avionics originally designed over twenty years ago. The three-increment Extremely High

Frequency Satellite Communications and Computer Upgrade program (EHF SATCOM and Computer Upgrade) seeks first, in Increment 1, to upgrade the Spirit's flight management computers as an enabler for future avionics efforts. Increment 2 integrates the Family of Beyond-line-of-sight Terminals (FAB-T) along with a low observable antenna to provide secure, survivable strategic two-way communications, while Increment 3 will connect the B-2 into the Global Information Grid. Increment 1 of EHF SATCOM and Computer Upgrade is currently in Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) and on track to begin procurement in FY11 for fleet installation beginning at the end of FY13.

The B-2 is also replacing the original radar antenna and upgrading selected radar avionics as part of the Radar Modernization Program (RMP) to change the radar operating frequency. RMP recently recovered from development challenges and has been approved to enter production. The LRIP contract for the first six production radar kits was signed on 29 December 2008, with the second and final buy for the remaining seven shipsets slated for later this year. Seven radar shipsets were also bought during development and are currently being installed in fleet aircraft to round out the 20 aircraft B-2 fleet; the developmental units will be retrofitted to the final production configuration. Thanks in large part to Congressional support, the RMP acquisition strategy was modified to include both life-of-type component buys to avoid diminishing manufacturing issues during the production run, and advance procurement to recover five months of the schedule lost while resolving the RMP integration issues during development.

B-52

The B-52 Stratofortress is our Nation's oldest frontline long-range strategic bomber, with the last airframe entering service with the United States Air Force in 1962. Given the expected service life of the aircraft, the B-52 airframes will be the longest operationally employed powered war machine in history, far surpassing the lifespan of any other single model land, sea or air weapon system. For more than 40 years B-52s have been the backbone of the strategic bomber force for the U.S. The B-52 is capable of dropping or launching the widest array of weapons in the U.S. inventory, including gravity bombs, cluster bombs, precision guided missiles and JDAMs. Updated with modern technology, the B-52 will be capable of delivering the full complement of Joint developed weapons and will continue into the 21st Century as an important element of our Nation's defenses.

The Air Force has invested in B-52 modernization programs to keep the platform operationally relevant by adding satellite and nuclear survivable and secure wideband high data rate communications; Sniper and LITENING Advanced Targeting Pods; aircraft computer and data transfer unit upgrades; and integration of smart weapons to improve conventional warfare capability.

Together with the B-1 and the B-2, the B-52 serves as a key component of the U.S.' long-range bomber force. It has earned respect as a highly capable conventional and nuclear combat platform during the Cold War, the Vietnam War, DESERT STORM, OAF, OIF, OEF, and frequently deploys to Guam to provide a continuous bomber presence mission in the Pacific. The B-52 continues to serve the Nation well as it has during its long and distinguished history, and we have provided significant support across the Future Years Defense Program in recognition of its value.

V. Closing

Your Air Force stands ready to win today's Joint fight and plan for tomorrow's challenges. We are committed to working together to determine the right procurement, sustainment and retirement strategy to ensure we are prepared for the current fight as well as posturing for future demands. Dominance of air, space, and cyberspace continues to be requisite to the defense of the United States. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to working in concert to ensure our decisions enable us to strengthen our Air Force to meet future requirements.