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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: Bomber Force Structure – current requirements and future vision

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Air Force Global Strike Command

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Introduction

Chairman Forbes, Ranking Member Courtney, and distinguished Members of the Committee; thank you for allowing me to represent the soon to be 31,000 Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) Airmen. As this committee knows, potential adversarial Nations around the world are continuing to modernize and replace their weapons systems. Additionally, many are upgrading their integrated air defenses and are fielding other anti-access capabilities. Therefore, I would like to take a few minutes to briefly discuss our bomber force structure, as well as to highlight some critical modernization initiatives that are required for AFGSC to deter our potential adversaries and assure our valued allies.

Air Force Global Strike Command Forces

As you know, the command was created to provide a focus on the stewardship and operation of two legs of our nation's nuclear triad while also accomplishing the conventional global strike mission. Due to the special trust and confidence the American people put in us every day, we can never fail them in ensuring a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

In addition to the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile mission, AFGSC is responsible for the B-52H Stratofortress (B-52) and B-2A Spirit (B-2) bombers. This includes maintaining the operational readiness of both the bombers' nuclear and conventional missions. The B-52 serves as the nation's most versatile and diverse weapon system in Air Force Global Strike Command by providing precision and timely long range strike capabilities. Meanwhile, the B-2 can penetrate our adversaries' most advanced Integrated Air Defenses Systems to strike heavily defended targets.

Our flexible dual-capable bomber fleet is the most visible leg of the nuclear triad. They provide decision makers the ability to demonstrate resolve through generation, dispersal, or deployment, and the ability to quickly place bomber sorties on alert thereby ensuring their continued survival in support of the President and to meet combatant command requirements.

In two days, AFGSC will assume responsibility for the B-1B Lancer (B-1) mission and the Airmen who operate, maintain, and support this proven war horse. They provide a vital capability to combatant commanders and I look forward to providing them the support they need. Allow me a few minutes to highlight each bomber platform with you.

B-1

The B-1 is a highly versatile, multi-mission weapon system that carries the largest payload of both guided and unguided weapons in the Air Force inventory. It can rapidly deliver massive quantities of precision and non-precision weapons against any adversary, anywhere in the world, at any time. Our B-1 aircrews have been engaged in continuous combat operations; since September 11, 2001, they have flown over 14,000 combat missions.

The B-1's synthetic aperture radar is capable of tracking, targeting, and engaging moving vehicles as well as having self-targeting, terrain-following modes and air-to-air situational awareness. The SNIPER-SE pod provides additional capability to engage fixed or moving targets. In addition, an extremely accurate Global Positioning System-aided Inertial Navigation System enables aircrews to navigate without the aid of ground-based navigation aids as well as strike targets with a high level of precision. The Digital Communications Initiative (DCI) modification to the radios provides a secure beyond line of sight satellite connection into the Line of Sight (LOS) Link-16 network. In a time sensitive targeting environment, the aircrew can use targeting data from the Combined Air Operations Center over DCI, then strike emerging targets rapidly and efficiently. This capability was effectively demonstrated during operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

We will need the B-1 for many more years and future avionics and weapon upgrades are critical for it to remain a viable Combatant Commander tool. The Integrated Battle Station (IBS)/Software Block-16 (SB-16) upgrade, the largest ever B-1 modification, includes an upgraded Central Integrated Test System (CITS), Fully Integrated Data Link (FIDL), Vertical Situation Display Upgrade (VSDU), and a simulator upgrade. This marks a fantastic capability upgrade and the associated cockpit upgrades providing the crew with a much more flexible, integrated cockpit. This will allow the B-1 to operate in the fast-paced integrated battlefield of the future.

B-52

The B-52 may be the most universally recognized symbol of American airpower...its contributions to our national security through the Cold War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Allied Force, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom are well documented. Our Airmen have worked tirelessly to keep the venerable B-52 in the air. The B-52 is able to deliver the widest variety of nuclear and conventional weapons. This past year, we maintained complete coverage of our

Nuclear Deterrence Operations requirements while supporting our overseas Continuous Bomber Presence (CBP) for Pacific Command.

I anticipate the B-52 will remain a key element of our bomber force beyond 2040; it is paramount we invest resources into this aircraft now to keep it viable in both conventional and nuclear mission areas for the next 30 years. Our B-52s are still using 1960s radar technology and the last major radar upgrade was done in the early 1980s. Currently, the meantime to fail rate on the B-52 radar is 46 hours. The current radar on the B-52 will be even less effective in the future threat environment, and without an improved radar system on the B-52, there will be increased degradation in mission effectiveness. Hence, we are conducting the study phase of the B-52 Radar Modernization Program, that I believe is vitally important in ensuring the B-52 remains viable through 2040 at a minimum.

In addition, the B-52 is the only aircraft in the USAF combat Air Forces that is not Link 16 capable. Hence denying our ability to integrate and communicate with other CAF assets. Finally, AFGSC will work closely with SAF/AQ and Dr. Bill Laplante's team to look at the affordability of "re-engining" our B-52s in order to reduce fuel consumption, fly higher and farther, and reduce air-to-air refueling requirements.

B-2

For 20 years, the B-2 has defended America as our most modern strategic deterrent. In each of our nation's last four armed conflicts, the B-2 has led the way in combat. The B-2 is able to penetrate heavily defended enemy defenses and deliver a wide variety of nuclear and conventional weapons due to its long-range and stealth capability.

We will preserve and improve the B-2's capability to penetrate hostile airspace and hold any target at risk without subjecting the crew and aircraft to undetected threats. To do this, we secured JROC validation of the Defensive Management System-Modernization (DMS-M) Capabilities Development Document, which will allow the program to enter into the Engineering and Manufacturing Development phase to acquire a new system. This upgrade provides the B-2 aircrew with improved threat situational awareness and increased survivability by replacing the current DMS Threat Emitter Locator System and display system with modernized and sustainable systems capable of addressing advanced threats. This program will keep the B-2 viable in future anti-access environments. We also continue work on the Common Very Low Frequency Receiver (CVR) to permit aircrews to better receive strategic communication

messages and the B-2 Flexible Strike Phase 1 that will allow for future weapon capability upgrades.

AFGSC continues to evolve B-2 conventional combat capability by fielding vital programs such as the Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP). Successful fielding of the 30,000-pound MOP bolstered our nation's ability to hold hardened, deeply buried targets at risk. Flight testing of the MOP completed successfully and AFGSC will become the lead command for MOP sustainment starting next fiscal year. We would like to thank Congress for your support on this critical program.

We are striving to maintain the proper balance of fleet sustainment efforts, testing, aircrew training, and combat readiness. The dynamics of a small fleet continue to challenge our sustainment efforts primarily due to vanishing vendors and diminishing sources of supply. Air Force Materiel Command is working to ensure timely parts availability; however, many manufacturers do not see a strong business case in supplying parts for a small aircraft fleet. Problems with a single part can have a significant readiness impact on a small fleet that lacks the flexibility of a large force to absorb parts shortages and logistics delays.

Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B)

The combat edge our bombers provide will be challenged by next generation air defenses and the proliferation of these advanced systems. The LRS-B program will extend American air dominance against next generation capabilities and advanced air defense environments. LRS-B's long range, significant payload, and survivability will provide operational flexibility for Combatant Commanders around the world. Additionally, its ability to penetrate air defenses while carrying a mixture of stand-off and direct-attack munitions make LRS-B a potent weapon in the Air Force's arsenal. It also continues the advantages our current bombers give us: flexibility and the ability to be relocated and recalled.

We continue to work closely with partners throughout the Air Force to develop the LRS-B and field a fleet of new dual-capable bombers; scheduled to become operational in the mid-2020s. The LRS-B will be a nuclear bomber; however, the platform will not be delayed for use in a conventional capacity while it undergoes final nuclear certification.

Air Launched Cruise Missile

Before I finish my opening remarks, allow me to mention three weapons that I will be very focused on for our bomber fleet. First, the AGM-86B Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) is an air-to-ground, winged, subsonic nuclear missile delivered by the B-52. It was fielded in the 1980s and is well beyond its originally designed 10-year service life. To ensure the B-52 remains a credible part of the triad, the ALCM requires Service Life Extension Programs (SLEP). These SLEPs require ongoing support and attention to ensure the ALCM will remain viable through 2030. Despite its age, last year we successfully conducted six flight test evaluations, and we plan seven this year to fully comply with USSTRATCOM directives.

Long Range Stand-Off Missile

The LRSO is the replacement for the aging ALCM, which will have significant capability gaps beginning late this decade and worsening through the next. Replacement of the ALCM was identified by OSD in a 2007 Program Decision Memorandum and reiterated in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, the Airborne Strategic Deterrence Capability Based Assessment, and the Initial Capability Document. In a similar manner to LRS-B, the LRSO is necessary to ensure we maintain a credible deterrent in the future with the ability to strike at targets from beyond contested airspace in anti-access and area denial environments. The LRSO will be compatible with the B-52, B-2, and the LRS-B platforms. The LRSO Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) is complete and JROC approved, and in February 2014, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force signed the Draft Capabilities Development Document. LRSO was selected by SAF/AQ as a pilot program for "Bending the Cost Curve" and "Owning the Technical Baseline," which are new acquisition initiatives and is currently planned for reaching Milestone A next fiscal year. We fully intend to develop a conventional version of the LRSO as a future spiral to the nuclear variant.

B61

Finally, the B61-12 Life Extension Program (LEP) will result in a smaller stockpile, reduced special nuclear material in the inventory, and improved B61 surety. AFGSC is the lead command for the B61-12 Tail Kit Assembly program, which is needed to meet USSTRATCOM requirements on the B-2. The B61-12 Tail Kit Assembly program is in the Engineering and Manufacturing Development Phase 1 and is synchronized with NNSA efforts. The design and production processes are on schedule and within budget to meet the planned Fiscal Year 2020

First Production Unit date for the B61-12 Tail Kit Assembly, and support the lead time required for the March 2020 B61-12 all-up round. This joint Department of Defense and Department of Energy endeavor allows for continued attainment of our strategic requirements and regional commitments.

Conclusion

Thank you for your continued support of Air Force Global Strike Command and our nuclear deterrent and global strike missions. Fiscal constraints, while posing planning challenges, do not alter the national security landscape or the intent of competitors and adversaries, nor do they diminish the enduring value of long range, strategic forces to our nation. AFGSC will continue to seek innovative, cost-saving measures to ensure our weapon systems are operating as efficiently as possible. In closing, it is an honor to be a Wingman to the outstanding Airmen who make up Air Force Global Strike Command – together we will continue to provide the deterrence and assurance the nation has come to expect of us.