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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: Strategic Bombers, Aerial Refueling, and Airlift Projection Forces

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I. Introduction

Chairman Akin, Ranking Member McIntyre, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for calling this hearing, and for the opportunity to provide you with an update on the missions and accomplishments of Air Force strategic bombers, aerial refueling platforms, and airlift projection forces. The Air Force is fully engaged in operations across the globe, enabling Combatant Commanders to successfully execute their missions. As we manage this effort in an era of fiscal challenges, preserving the readiness of the force is our prime imperative. Looking ahead, the joint and coalition team will continue to rely on the Air Force to provide these unique bomber, tanker and airlift contributions to national security.

In a complex environment requiring a wide range of mission capabilities, the Air Force provides what we have called “Four plus one” unique contributions—gaining control of air, space, and cyberspace; holding targets at risk around the world; providing responsive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); rapidly transporting people and equipment across the globe; and providing command and control to conduct operations rapidly, effectively and efficiently. Collectively, they not only distinguish our Air Force as the preeminent air and space power, they also bolster the United States’ reputation as the world’s most responsive and capable strategic actor. We provide America with a wide range of strategic options for rapid power projection with minimum vulnerability and maximum precision.

II. Contributions of our Air Force

Today, the Air Force flies and fights in air, space, and cyberspace as a valued member of our joint and coalition teams. Last fiscal year the Air Force conducted more than 41,000 sorties in support of Operation NEW DAWN (OND), almost 118,000 sorties in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), delivered over 1.78 million passengers and 712,000 tons of cargo, and employed almost 2,580 short tons of munitions. Additionally, since 2003, we have transported nearly 86,000 patients from the Central Command area of responsibility to hospital facilities in Europe and the United States.

The Air Force possesses unique capabilities to achieve lethal and non-lethal effects that shape the strategic behavior of others, often at long range and in heavily opposed environments. Maintaining our conventional precision strike capability, along with credible nuclear deterrence, will continue to play a critical role in strategic deterrence, crisis response, and global stability.

Based on Secretary of Defense direction, the Air Force is developing a new Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B). The LRS-B will be one component of a larger family of systems for conventional Long Range Strike, including ISR, electronic attack, communications and other capabilities. The LRS-B will also be nuclear capable and designed to accommodate manned or unmanned operations. The Air Force will use a streamlined management approach and make capability tradeoffs as necessary to hold procurement unit costs at estimated targets. The program plans to ensure sufficient production for a sustainable inventory over the long term (approximately 80-100 aircraft), delivering an initial capability in the mid-2020s.

Military operations rely on Air Force mobility to transport people, fuel, and equipment quickly and precisely around the world. The dedicated people and high-tech systems providing rapid global mobility underpin U.S. crisis response, long-range strike, joint combat support, humanitarian relief, and global logistics. The distinctive capability of intercontinental and intra-theater airlift remains a bedrock of U.S. power projection.

These effects are realized by the success of our tanker fleet, the backbone of the Department of Defense's global power projection and global reach capabilities. This fleet consists of 414 KC-135 and 59 KC-10 aircraft, both with a projected service life through 2040. At that time, the average age of the KC-135 will be over 80 years, and the KC-10 will average over 54 years. This past year, our tankers flew over 99,000 hours in support of OEF, 14,000 hours in support of OND, and 19,000 hours in support Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP) for operations in Libya.

While the Air Force is fully committed to ongoing operations, we must also continue to identify and prepare counter future threats. Current and emerging capabilities and strategies, sometimes referred to as "anti-access and area denial", reflect the changing character of future warfare. The Air Force must adapt, by enhancing existing capabilities and, where necessary, carefully adding new ones, while more integrating conceptually and operationally with our sister services. The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps are working together to develop and implement the Air-Sea Battle (ASB) operational concept. By collaborating with the sea services, and by seeking methods to integrate our operations both within the services and our allies, we can maintain the US military's advantage in the air, space, and maritime domains and guarantee both access to the global commons and our freedom of action.

Finally, our efforts succeed only through the sacrifice, hard work and dedication of every Airman in the Total Force. Nearly 39,000 Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard Airmen are deployed to 135 locations across the globe, with over 29,000 in and around Afghanistan and Iraq, as we unwaveringly do whatever it takes to prevail in today's wars.

III. Current Platforms

Strategic Bombers

The Air Force's bomber fleet of B-1, B-2, and B-52 aircraft provides an unmatched long-range precision strike capability. On a daily basis, these 162 aircraft perform critical missions from precision strike in support of OEF, to the continuous bomber presence in the Pacific, and the enduring nuclear deterrence mission. The Air Force is committed to future long-range strike capabilities as part of a comprehensive, phased plan, valued at \$5.5 billion over the FYDP, to modernize and sustain our bomber force.

B-1 LANCER

The 66 aircraft B-1 fleet has maintained a deployed presence since the 9/11 attacks in support of both OEF and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). During this time, the B-1 has flown more than 9,000 missions and amassed more than 105,000 combat hours. In OEF alone, the B-1 has delivered nearly 40 percent of all munitions dropped, while flying only 5 percent of all sorties. In March of this year, the B-1 demonstrated its range and lethality as two aircraft departed from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota in the middle of a snowstorm, flying over 20 hours to Libya to conduct four strike missions within 96 hours of each other in direct support of Operation ODYSSEY DAWN (OOD).

As part of a continuing effort to ensure the capability of the B-1, the Air Force is retiring six aircraft to fund modifications through the remainder of the B-1 fleet. These modifications are essential to correct safety-of-flight discrepancies and without which the B-1 fleet system will begin to experience grounding issues which will severely undermine its deterrence and power projection capabilities. This is strictly a programming action, taking acceptable (moderate) risk to the overall bomber capability requirement.

BUDGET IMPACT: With respect to the FY12 budget, the Air Force strongly opposes Congressional language that imposes B-1 force structure restrictions. A six and a half year

moratorium on B-1 force structure will critically impact the Air Force's ability to operate efficiently and effectively by restricting force structure decision-making to comply with rigid Congressional requirements. The overall health and viability of the B-1 fleet will be significantly enhanced by the platform modification and sustainment funding made possible with the retirement of six B-1 bombers as outlined in the FY12 Presidential Budget. Modification of the B-1 fleet is essential to correct safety-of-flight discrepancies attributed to the Vertical Situation Display Upgrade. The retirement of six B-1s will be used to fund these programs. Without the availability of this funding, the B-1 weapon system will begin to experience grounding issues which will severely undermine its deterrence and power projection capabilities. The Air Force strongly recommends Congressional support to retire six B-1s as outlined in the FY12 Presidential Budget to ensure the health and continued viability of the B-1 fleet.

B-2 SPIRIT

The 20 aircraft B-2 fleet performs nuclear deterrence and strategic attack missions to provide the U.S. with global range, precision strike, large and flexible payload capability. It is the only aircraft capable of long-range delivery of direct attack munitions in an anti-access environment. Like the B-1, the B-2 also showed its global reach by flying combat missions from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri non-stop to Libya in support of OOD. Additionally, the B-2 is part of Pacific Command's Continuous Bomber Presence to assure allies and support US interests in the Pacific.

BUDGET IMPACT: With respect to the FY12 budget, the Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) has proposed a reduction of \$22.0 million Research Development Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding in FY12 to the B-2 Defensive Management System (DMS). The DMS was just approved to begin technology development. This reduction will prevent the Air Force from pursuing development acceleration initiatives that can potentially reduce the overall program schedule by three years, and save half a billion dollars. Additionally, the SAC passed two separate rescissions of FY11 procurement funding – \$33 million of B-2 modification funding and \$22.579 million of B-2 MultiDisplay Unit funding. The combined rescissions would decimate B-2 FY11 procurement funds, leaving less remaining in the modification account than has already been spent.

Furthermore, the House reduced B-2 FY12 modernization funding by \$10.3 million. The reduction is roughly one quarter of the \$41.315 million requested, and will prevent installation of

the final two radar antenna kits as part of the Radar Modernization Program, prevent training system upgrades, and eliminate the ability to perform low cost low observable improvements to the B-2 aircraft.

B-52 STRATOFORTRESS

The 76 aircraft of the B-52 fleet are our nation's oldest bombers yet they maintain a diverse range of critical capabilities. The B-52 has flown combat missions in support of OEF, OIF and supported the Pacific Command's Continuous Bomber Presence mission on Guam in addition to its nuclear deterrence mission. The Air Force remains committed to ensuring the B-52 fleet, the backbone of the manned strategic bomber for the United States, remains viable through 2040. Major B-52 modernizations include upgrades to communications, radar, and to the internal weapons bay. Updated with modern technology, the B-52 will be capable of delivering the full array of jointly developed weapons.

BUDGET IMPACT: With respect to the FY12 budget, the SAC has reduced the FY12 RDT&E funding by \$16.0 million for 1760 Internal Weapons Bay Upgrade. This reduction will prevent timely procurement of weapon flight test articles to support FY14 testing thus delaying integration of Joint Direct Attack Munition, Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile, and Miniature Air Launched Decoy onto the B-52.

Aerial Refueling

KC-10 EXTENDER

The KC-10 provides a unique capability through its combination of strategic offload, ability to receive fuel in-flight, significant dual role cargo capacity, and same-sortie boom and drogue refueling comprise a flexible mobility asset. Deployed worldwide, its ability to refuel U.S., allied, and coalition receivers same-sortie with boom or drogue as well as to consolidate fuel from other tankers has provided outstanding flexibility. In FY11, the KC-10 flew over 33,000 hours in OEF, 2,700 hours in OND and 4,000 hours in OUP.

The Air Force is modernizing the KC-10 fleet to maintain capabilities such as the replacing the Boom Control Unit and the Communication/Navigation/Surveillance Air Traffic Management modification program, designed to ensure access to international civil airspace in general and fuel efficient routes and altitudes in particular.

BUDGET IMPACT: For the FY12 budget, there are no impacts to the KC-10 program.

KC-135 STRATOTANKER

The KC-135 is the primary workhorse of our refueling aircraft, comprising 88% of the Mobility Air Forces (MAF) tanker force with a fleet of 414 aircraft. It currently supports every major overseas contingency operation, enabling a wide range of missions from fighter aircraft employment and deployment missions, air bridge support for airlift operations requiring long range with strategic payloads, providing extended range and loiter to special operations forces, and enhancing the speed and range of aeromedical evacuation. In FY11, the KC-135 flew over 66,000 hours in support of OEF, 12,000 hours in OND, and 15,000 hours for OUP.

The Air Force is committed to the modernization of the KC-135 to ensure sufficient air refueling capacity and capability until sufficient replacement tanker capacity exists. Due to the KC-46A fielding and eventual retirement of the KC-135, new major modifications are restricted by a “Sunset Clause” that restricts major modifications within five years of retirement. Aircraft planned for later retirements may receive modifications that are not fleet wide.

BUDGET IMPACT: For the FY12 budget, there are no impacts to the KC-135 program.

Airlift Projection

C-5 GALAXY

The C-5 provides passenger and outsized/oversized cargo airlift, airland, and special operations missions. The aircraft can carry fully equipped, combat-ready military units to any region in the world on short notice and provide field support required to help sustain the force. Additionally, with the C-5’s unique visor door and kneeling capability, the aircraft can both load and offload (roll on/roll off), simultaneously. The Air Force continues to modernize the C-5 through avionics modernization and engine upgrades. These modernizations programs improve aircraft availability, climb and cruise performance, reduce fuel usage 10-20%, and meet Stage IV Federal Aviation Administration noise standards.

BUDGET IMPACT: For the FY12 budget, there are no any impacts to the C-5 program.

C-17 GLOBEMASTER III

The C-17 is the nation’s primary intertheater military airlifter and continues to excel in a wide range of operational missions. It is the only aircraft capable of delivering outsized cargo to small, austere airfields. It is also capable of aerial delivery, night vision goggle (NVG) operations, nuclear weapons transportation, and aeromedical evacuation. The C-17 provides the flexibility to support both intertheater and intratheater missions and allows Air Mobility Command to significantly improve throughput during contingency operations. The Air Force

continues to make capability improvements to production aircraft with fielded aircraft systematically undergoing block upgrades through the Global Reach Improvement Program or field retrofits. Both methodologies are used to achieve a single-model “homogenous” aircraft fleet.

BUDGET IMPACT: For the FY12 budget, there are no impacts to the C-17 program.

C-130 HERCULES

The C-130 Hercules is the primary combat delivery aircraft for the military. Employed primarily in an intratheater airlift role, the “Herk” provides rapid transport of personnel and cargo by aerial delivery to a designated drop zone, or by landing at austere locations within a theater of operations. A highly versatile weapon system, C-130 variants routinely provide combat delivery capability, conduct aeromedical evacuation missions, penetrate hurricanes, provide combat communications links, facilitate rescues on land or at sea, service our remote stations at the North and South Poles, refuel aircraft, broadcast radio and television messages, and fight forest fires, as well as provide for clandestine penetration and close air support/battlefield interdiction. In addition, C-130s have the capability to augment intertheater airlift forces as well as support humanitarian, peacekeeping, and disaster relief operations when needed.

BUDGET IMPACT: For the FY12 budget, there are no impacts to the C-130 program.

IV. Long Term Impact of Sequestration

Further budget reductions in addition to those imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 will require an enterprise-wide review of all resources and potentially restrict or terminate critical acquisition initiatives, modernization requirements and possibly eliminate lower priority missions and activities executed by the Air Force. As the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force stated in his October 27, 2011 hearing to the House Armed Services Committee, “In a scenario where the budget reductions exceed the \$450 billion of cuts envisioned by the BCA, we would need to go beyond merely constricting our capacity, and instead shed several required capabilities, thereby fundamentally changing the complexion and character of the Air Force. We may be unable to continue to perform certain missions and would certainly increase the risk of mission failure in those capabilities that we retain.”

V. Closing

The Air Force stands ready to win today's joint fight and plan for tomorrow's challenges. We are committed to working together to determine a fiscally sound procurement, sustainment and retirement strategy to remain prepared for the current fight, while posturing for future demands. Dominance of air, space, and cyberspace continues to be vital to the defense of the United States; our projection forces remain an integral part of that strategy. As Secretary Panetta recently testified at his October 13, 2011 hearing to the House Armed Services Committee, "...we absolutely have to avoid a hollow force and maintain a military that, even if smaller, will be ready, agile and deployable." 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.