NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: Air Force Tactical Aviation Programs

COMBINED STATEMENT OF: Major General James M. Holmes
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations,
Plans and Requirements

Major General John D. Posner
Director of Global Power Programs, Office of the
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition)

March 20, 2012

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

I. Introduction

Chairmen Bartlett, Ranking Member Reyes and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with an update on the Air Forces' tactical aviation, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) programs. The Air Force remains fully engaged worldwide, supporting the Combatant Commanders requirements and executing our National Strategy.

Finding the proper balance between force structure, readiness and modernization is our guiding principle. While we will be smaller force, we will maintain the agility, flexibility and readiness required to meet our commitments to the Combatant Commander's as well as continue to modernize and grow more capable in the future. The service protected our distinctive capabilities fundamental to the priorities of the new strategic guidance: control of air, space and cyberspace; global intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; rapid global mobility and global strike -- all enabled by effective command and control.

II. Current Environment and Operations Update

Today, the Air Force flies and fights in air, space, and cyberspace--globally and reliably--as a valued member of our Joint and Coalition teams. Over 30,000 Airmen are deployed across the globe, including over 23,000 in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility, with another 134,000 "committed in place" to defend the homeland, command and control our nuclear forces, operate remotely piloted aircraft, and support other Combatant Commander requirements. The Air Force is an active partner in Defense Department planning that will shift our emphasis from today's wars, to the broader range of challenges and opportunities posed by the President's strategic guidance, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. Be assured that Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who deploy in support of our global commitments will do so with an Air Force that is agile, flexible, ready, and technologically advanced. Last fiscal year alone, Air Force global precision attack aircraft flew over 24,000 sorties and 110,000 hours in support of Overseas Contingency Operations,

Since September 11, 2001 your mobility air forces have executed more than 440,000 airlift sorties, moving more than 3.6 million tons of cargo and nearly 6.9 million passengers in support

of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and then NEW DAWN. Your combat air forces simultaneously provided top cover and weapons on target with another 162,000 sorties supporting those same operations. Aeromedical evacuation crews surged to complete nearly 180,000 patient movements, averaging 52 per day. On the home front, Air Force fighter, air refueling, and early warning aircraft have flown almost 62,000 total sorties supporting Operation NOBLE EAGLE. As a testament to the capability of our Total Force, the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve have flown more than 65 percent of these sorties with the Air National Guard currently operating 17 of 18 Aerospace Control Alert sites across the United States.

As we transition to support the new Defense Strategy, we must carefully balance our force between the active and reserve components to maintain what will be a smaller Air Force at a higher state of readiness. One part of the solution will be to pursue Active Associations with many Air Reserve Component units, combining active duty and reserve component airmen on the same operational team.

We will also maintain readiness with our 4th generation fighter fleet while remaining committed to an events-based schedule to ready the F-35A fleet for training. Furthermore, we expect the high demand for Air Force ISR will remain firmly in place and we plan to meet this demand and sustain global operations with a combination of both manned and unmanned aircraft. We continue to rely heavily on the multi-intelligence, high-altitude capabilities of the U-2 which has averaged some 15 to 16 thousand flight hours per annum for more than 5 years. Although the FY13 PB divests the RQ-4 Global Hawk Block 30 fleet, the RQ-4 Block 40 will augment the U-2's multi-spectral imaging and other unique capabilities, by providing sustained, persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance with a robust Ground Moving Target Indication capability.

The MC-12W Project Liberty aircraft remain heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan and flew over 17,000 missions in 2011. The Air Force is fulfilling the CENTCOM requirement for thirty deployed Project Liberty aircraft. An additional seven aircraft remain in CONUS as trainers at

Beale Air Force Base as we prepare to transition the majority of this important ISR mission to the Air National Guard starting in Fiscal Year 2014.

The Air Force continues to work towards meeting the current strategy laid out by the President and the Secretary of Defense, while operating in a more fiscally constrained environment. The FY13 PB retains critical core capabilities and maintains the Air Force's ability to rapidly respond to global mission demands. It requires the Air Force to balance risk, modernization and force structure reductions with a commitment to maintain readiness and take care of our people. We stand ready to support the Department's efforts to meet the demands of the U.S. National Security Strategy.

III. Force Structure and Modernization

Fighters

In 2011, Air Force analysis indicated a fighter force structure of 1,200 primary mission aircraft and 2,000 total aircraft were required to execute the National Military Strategy (NMS) with some risk. The new strategic guidance combined with new fiscal constraints required the Air Force to balance risk across its core functions. Current analysis estimates fighter force structure demand at approximately 1100 primary mission aircraft and approximately 1900 total fighter aircraft to carry out the NMS with increased risk. Additionally, the Air Force previously reported a fighter force shortfall in both the near and mid-term. We aggressively pursued mitigating efforts to meet force structure requirements. The most significant efforts involved closely monitoring F-35 production and increasing production as capability matures, and 4th generation sustainment and modernization. The F-35 program status remains the key variable in the fighter force structure as the Air Force transitions to a fifth generation fighter force. Current Air Force mitigation options preserve decision space as we carefully monitor program status and impending decision points.

As directed, to develop the FY13 PB the Air Force accepted risk in our Combat Air Forces by retiring or reclassifying aircraft from seven squadrons: five A-10 squadrons, one F-16 squadron, and one training/support coded F-15 Aggressor squadron. We chose to retire more A-10s as a result of guidance to size our forces for one large scale combined arms campaign with sufficient

combat power to also deny a second adversary, without conducting a large scale, prolonged stability operation. The A-10 remains essential for combined arms and stability operations and we retain enough A-10s to meet the requirements of the new strategic guidance, but multi-role platforms provide more utility across the range of the potential missions for which we are directed to prepare. After reductions, we retain 54 combat-coded fighter squadrons and maintain the capabilities and capacity required to meet the requirements of new strategic guidance at increased risk while providing a bridge to the Fifth Generation F-35.

A-10

The A-10 provides our Joint Force Commanders responsive, lethal, precise, and persistent firepower for close air support and combat search and rescue. It has been a steady, stellar performer in all recent conflicts. Notably, the A-10's very high operations tempo and advanced age present substantial sustainment challenges. Reflecting this, the A-10's FY11 aircraft availability rate was 59 percent.

The Air Force plans to retain 242 A-10s through 2030. The FY13 PB invests approximately $205M across the FYDP to fund A-10 modernization, sustainment, and life extension programs. Following completion of the Precision Engagement modification in FY11, all previously designated "A" model aircraft were designated as the A-10C. The Precision Engagement upgrade gives the venerable A-10 the ability to deliver the newest and greatest complement of weapons than was ever available before, through the integration of targeting pods, digital data links and global positioning systems. Installation of the Helmet Mounted Cueing System, beginning in FY12, will provide increased situational awareness to the pilot. Further, installation of the first of the new replacement wings began in FY11, an essential program for the long-term structural longevity of the airplane. Other updates include a replacement portable maintenance tester and improved turbine and aircraft monitoring systems used to monitor structural fatigues and stresses. Emphasis on the continued health and upgrades will ensure the A-10 excels at close air support for the next two decades.

F-16

Our primary multi-role F-16 comprises 50 percent of the current fighter fleet. The FY13 PB invests approximately $1.4 billion across the FYDP for F-16 modernization, life extension, and continued sustainment to meet critical warfighter needs to 2025 and beyond. The majority of the efforts to accomplish this across the FYDP will focus on the Legacy Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) and Combat Avionics Programmed Extension Suites (CAPES) modernization program for 300 aircraft, with the intent of reaching 350 aircraft. The requirement for the legacy SLEP is highlighted by bulkhead cracks found in approximately 73 percent of our Block 40/52 F-16 aircraft.

Legacy SLEP will extend airframe structural service life by approximately 25 percent from the current 8,000 hours to 10,000+ hours, adding about six to eight years. The FY13 PB request adds $8.8 million to continue design and development of structural modification kits for the Block 40-52 fleet to be responsive to the Air Force's total fighter requirement. Additionally, the Falcon Structural Augmentation Roadmap (STAR) program, which replaces known life-limited structural components and maintains the original design airframe life of 8,000 actual flight hours, has been rephrased to complete in FY15.

The FY13 PB adds $69.7 million in development, with a total of $526 million in development and procurement funding laid in across the FYDP for F-16 CAPES. This will allow for the development of capabilities for advanced electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, a new center cockpit display unit, data link enhancements and an improved electronic warfare defensive suite upgrades. These avionic upgrades will keep the F-16 Block 40-52s relevant in the threat environment beyond 2025 until replaced by the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Currently the F-16 aircraft availability is 64.9 percent and in FY11was 66.1 percent. F-16 fleet aircraft availability dropped 4.9 percent since FY05. Drivers to the reduced availability include the Falcon STAR (all blocks) structural integrity program, engine inlet ram (all blocks), lower wing skin cracking (blocks 25/30/32), and aft cockpit corrosion for two seat aircraft. We expect these drivers to continue to impact aircraft availability through FY15.

F-15 C/D

The FY13 President's Budget (PB) invests approximately $1.7 billion across the Fiscal Year Defense Plan (FYDP) on modernization and sustainment programs for the F-15C/D fleet. We project the F-15C/D fleet will remain viable until 2030-2035 with potential for an airframe service life extension following full-scale fatigue testing. This test is underway and will conclude in 2014. The Air Force manages the fleet through scheduled field and depot inspections under an individual aircraft tracking program. In FY 2011, the F-15C/D's aircraft availability was 55.9 percent.

We continue to modernize our F-15C/D fleet with Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars, and a more capable aircraft mission computer. We expect these efforts to enable 175 F-15C/D aircraft to operate safely and effectively through at least 2035 as determined by the full-scale fatigue test. We may extend the long-term status to the entire 249 aircraft inventory based on requirements of the future force structure.

F-15E

The F-15E fleet continues to provide support for on-going operations. Aircraft availability for the F-15E in FY 2011 was 64.9 percent.

The FY 2013 President's Budget investment across the FYDP is approximately $2.1 billion for F-15E modernization and sustainment programs. This includes integrating the latest precision weapons to hit targets accurately and reduce collateral damage, and adding a helmet mounted cueing system for all front seat cockpits that will reduce the F-15E's time to engage a target. Finally, we are adding a state-of-the-art AESA radar system that advances capabilities to identify and engage targets. The Air Force expects the F-15E to be an integral part of the Nation's force through at least 2035. A full-scale fatigue test, due to be complete in 2015, will provide data regarding the feasibility of a service life extension.

Fifth Generation Fighters

Fifth generation fighters such as the F-22A and F-35 are key elements of our nation's defense and deterrent capability. These aircraft are necessary to maintain a margin of superiority which permits our air, sea, and ground forces freedom of maneuver and attack. They each possess unique, complimentary, and essential capabilities that provide synergistic effects across the spectrum of conflict. Legacy fourth generation aircraft simply cannot survive to operate and achieve the effects necessary to win in an integrated, anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) environment.

F22

The F-22 is the only fielded U.S. fighter capable of operating in A2/AD environments. F-22 attributes of stealth, super cruise, integrated avionics and sensors combine to deliver the Raptor's unique operational capability in A2/AD environments. F-22 modernization is required to counter threat advancement efforts that specifically target F-22 attributes. Accordingly, F-22 modernization is consistent with DoD Strategic Guidance to "invest as required to ensure [the] ability to operate effectively in A2/AD environments".

Focused on maintaining operational superiority against the advancing threat, the FY13 PB request for F-22 modernization investment includes $512M RDT&E plus $333M procurement in FY13. Modernization increment 2.0 is fielded now on the combat-coded F-22 fleet and will be the final (very capable war fighting) configuration of the F-22 training fleet at Tyndall AFB. Increment 3.1 initial operational capability (IOC) is scheduled to occur April 2012, delivering advanced air-ground capabilities including SAR ground mapping, threat geolocation, and SDB carriage. Increments 3.2A/B, fielding in 2014/2018 respectively, will deliver advanced electronic protection and combat ID, AIM-120D and AIM-9X missiles, and significantly-improved ground threat geolocation.

F-22 production is complete—the last Raptor is scheduled to be delivered in early May 2012, completing the program of record of 187 aircraft. The final F-22 fleet will include 139 combat coded Block 30/35s, 32 training Block 20s, 12 Developmental Test/Operational Test Block 20/30/35s, and 2 pre-block test aircraft. The production line is shut down with no plan for restart

at any time. Accordingly, all government-owned production tooling is being stored for F-22 sustainment purposes only.

The F-22 fleet stood down May-Sept 2011 while safety issues associated with delivery of adequate breathing oxygen to pilots were investigated. Purpose-built Safety Investigation and Science Advisory Board (SIB/SAB) investigations were not able to determine root cause but informed development of technical and procedural mitigations which enabled a safe return to flight (RTF). Over 7000 sorties have been flown since return to flight. RTF mitigations allowed 8 in-flight oxygen-related incidents to be resolved safely. Since the stand down, the F-22 fleet transition from production to sustainment has been marked by a solid improvement in operational availability (Ao)—growing from ~59% Ao for CY2011 to ~66% Ao in Jan 2012.

F-35

During FY12 the Air Force will continue the balanced approach across the global precision attack portfolio used in FY11 by prioritizing investment in fifth-generation aircraft while sustaining legacy platforms as a bridge to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The multi-role F-35A is the centerpiece of the Air Force's future precision attack capability. In addition to complementing the F-22's world class air superiority capabilities, the F-35A is designed to penetrate air defenses and deliver a wide range of precision munitions. This modern, fifth-generation aircraft brings the added benefit of increased allied interoperability and cost-sharing across Services and eight partner nations. The FY13 PB includes approximately $5 billion for continued development and procurement of 19 F-35A, conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft. In response to continued program cost growth, lagging production performance, and escalating concurrency modification costs, we reduced the program of record by 179 aircraft, 98 of those are USAF F-35A CTOL aircraft, over the FYDP in the FY13 PB. The reduction of F-35 quantities in the FYDP realigns the pace of production to balance the need for a stable industrial base with the realities of increasing concurrency modification costs and a resource-constrained fiscal environment. Finally, the FY13 PB suspended F-35 dual capable aircraft (DCA) funding until the program is mature enough to support DCA integration.

During calendar year 2011, the F-35 program team achieved a number of significant milestones, including: delivery of six training aircraft to Eglin AFB; achieving the 1,000th CTOL flight hour; performing the first successful fuel transfer from a KC-10 tanker; reaching over 450 CTOL flights for the year; rolling-out the first partner nation (UK) short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft from the production line in November 2011; and completion of academic and simulator requirements by the first two U.S. Air Force pilots at the Academic Training Center (ATC). They performed instructor pilot monitored engine runs in AF-9 to become the first operational, engine run qualified CTOL pilots.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

Recognizing the need for continued and improved ISR capabilities, and based on the 2011 ISR review, the Air Force is investing $7.1 billion in this core function in FY13. In our ISR aircraft fleet, we plan to divest all 18 RQ-4 Global Hawk Block 30 aircraft and retain the U-2S Dragon Lady program. Sustaining the U-2 fleet will ensure affordable and sustained high altitude ISR capabilities. Transferring the MC-12W Liberty from the Active Component to the Air National Guard (ANG) reflects the assessment that the ANG is the appropriate place for long-term, scalable support of medium altitude ISR. The Active Component will retain association with the ANG units. The MC-12W will also perform the mission of the divested RC-26 fleet. We are continuously improving the current suite of capabilities and will field the MQ-9 Reaper to meet delivery of 65 RPA combat air patrols (CAPs) by May 2014. We are actively managing our procurement rate of MQ-9s to efficiently increase RPA fleet size while allowing for necessary aircrew training.

U-2

The U-2S weapon system, consisting of the aircraft, sensors, data links, and ground stations, provides near real-time intelligence to support operations across the spectrum of conflict. The U-2S combines high-altitude over-flight and stand-off sensor capabilities with long endurance to provide deep look access, long dwell, and moderate survivability for penetration of defended airspace. Equipped with some of the most advanced sensors, the U-2S collects and reports photographic, electro-optical, infrared and radar imagery in addition to electronic and communications signals information. State-of-the-art data link systems enable U-2S reach back

operations from anywhere in the world. The FY13 PB maintains the U-2S, which is projected to remain viable until at least 2040.

RC-135

The RC-135 program provides rapid, adaptable, worldwide multi-intelligence collection, processing, and near-real-time reporting. The RC-135 is tasked across the full spectrum of military operations to monitor political, economic, and military actions of potential adversaries as part of Joint Task Force operations and JCS Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations (SRO). It can assess enemy intentions and determine technological capabilities by intercepting and exploiting vital intelligence information.

The RC-135 program consist of three unique models of 22 aircraft including 17 RC-135V/W RIVET JOINT , 2 RC-135U COMBAT SENT and 3 RC-135S COBRA BALL. The RIVET JOINT is a manned, medium-altitude, airborne SIGINT reconnaissance system, providing self-contained collection, processing, and near real-time dissemination via voice, text, and tactical data links. The COMBAT SENT is DoD's only Scientific and Technical ELINT collection airborne platform, while the COBRA BALL supports treaty verification and WMD proliferation.

The RC-135 program uses a spiral development process that results in a Baseline (BL) modernization strategy. This modernization strategy provides incremental improvements in capability to pace adversarial communication and weapons system technology advancements. A viability study conducted in 2008 concluded the RC-135 fleet was viable until at least 2040.

The newest baseline (BL10) delivers this month. BL10 represents the largest technological refreshment in the program's history. The main enhancement introduced by Baseline 10 will be the CORVUS system. CORVUS is a replacement of the RIVET JOINT's primary ELINT system.

The RC-135 program is in the process of integrating Wideband Global Satcom (WGS) onto the aircraft. WGS will provide a DoD dedicated, high-capacity, BLOS communications link; increasing near real-time PED capacity. The first WGS capable aircraft is scheduled to deliver in FY13.

The first of three United Kingdom RIVET JOINT aircraft are currently in depot undergoing conversion from a KC-135 to an RC-135. The aircraft is on schedule to deliver 1st quarter of FY14. The RIVET JOINT Cooperative Program strengthens our ISR partnership with our closest ally.

The RC-135's continue to be an integral part of the Air Force's commitment to provide ISR support to warfighters and COCOM's. RC-135's flew over 18,000 hours in 2011, including over 9,000 hours of tactical ISR support to Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and UNIFIED PROTECTOR. In addition to providing tactical ISR support the RC-135's continue to conduct strategic SRO missions across the globe.

MC-12

The MC-12W continues to be a major acquisition and operations success for the Air Force. The Liberty Project Aircraft were the result of the SECDEF's direction to surge more full motion video capability into Iraq and Afghanistan. The first MC-12W was delivered to the Air Force in June 2009, seven months after receipt of funding and deployed to Iraq less than 30 days later. Deployments to Afghanistan began in December 2009.

To date, 42 Liberty aircraft have been delivered to the Air Force. In 2011 alone, the MC-12W fleet amassed more than 13,000 combat sorties, providing critical full motion video and Signals Intelligence to the warfighter. The Air Force will continue fleet wide system upgrades to include high definition full motion video sensors and enhanced data links. The Liberty program is a true success story; the benchmark for rapid acquisition.

The Air Force FY 2013 budget retains core capabilities and maintains the Air Force's ability to rapidly respond to global mission demands. It requires the Air Force to balance modernization and force structure reductions with a commitment to maintain readiness and take care of our people. To align with the new defense strategy the Air Force will transfer MC-12W from the Active Component to the ANG and divest 11 RC-26 aircraft. Additionally, the Air Force will establish an Active Associate unit to conduct Formal Training Unit operations and to augment the ANG's deployed mission. Transferring the MC-12 to the ANG allows the Air Force to maintain state-of-the-art ISR capability and avoids heavy investment in a similar capability. This

change ensures continued deployed ISR capability as well as the viability of domestic response and DoD support to civil authorities and Homeland Defense missions.

Remotely Piloted Aircraft

Long-dwell RPAs, such as the Predator, Reaper, Global Hawk and other systems, have proven to be invaluable for monitoring activities in contested areas, enhancing situational awareness, protecting U.S. and friendly forces, and assisting in targeting enemy fighters. The Air Force is committed to continue growing the capacity of combat air patrols (CAPs) of Predator and Reaper RPAs. Due to their remote split operating concept of keeping the flight crews in the CONUS, these systems are currently providing 57 CAPs from forward locations while maintaining a minimum forward personnel footprint.

MQ-1

The MQ-1 Predator is a medium-altitude, long-endurance, remotely piloted aircraft for providing battle space awareness with the ability to provide modest armed over-watch and reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets. It carries two AGM-114 Hellfire missiles. MQ-1B production was completed in March 2011.

As the result of the decision to transition to an all MQ-9 RPA fleet, the Air Force elected to complete current modification efforts on the MQ-1B Predator system, but cease future development efforts. Current efforts will complete equipping the Predator with high definition video and hyper-spectral sensors, and install the capability to deliver the latest version of the AGM-114 Hellfire missiles.

Predator is an integral part of the Air Force's plan to provide 65 continuous CAPs, with further capability to surge to 85 CAPs. Today, Predator is providing 35 of 57 (MQ-1 / MQ-9) CAPs and will continue in this partnership role through FY23.

MQ-9

The MQ-9 Reaper is a multi-role remotely piloted aircraft capable of providing battle space awareness, armed over-watch and light strike against critical, emerging time sensitive targets with self- contained hard-kill capability.

The FY13 PB reduces the MQ-9 aircraft procurement rate from 48 in FY12 to 24 per year in FY13 and beyond to more effectively match MQ-9 aircraft force structure with aircrew force structure and training capacity. The FY13PB continues to fund development efforts for aircraft, ground control station, communication, and sensor system upgrades.

The current limiting factor to standing up and sustaining additional MQ-9 CAPs is trained aircrew personnel, not hardware. In past years, the Air Force utilized the instructor force to meet multiple operational CAP surge requirements. The AF is now reconstituting our training force structure and capacity over the next year in order to train the next round of aircrew personnel to enable continued growth and sustainment of MQ-9 CAP capability. Today, MQ-9 is providing 22 of 57 (MQ-1 / MQ-9) CAPs and will continue to grow in the percentage of CAPs as the trained MQ-9 aircrew force structure grows over the coming years. The Air Force plan is to begin growing the CAP capacity beyond 57 total in about a year with a glide path to reach 65 CAP capacity by 3Q 2014. There is currently no operational impact to the plan for the MQ-9 Reaper.

RQ-4

The Global Hawk Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) provides high altitude, deep look, long endurance intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), and Battle Management Command & Control (BMC2) enabler capability that complements space and other airborne collectors during peacetime, crisis, and war-fighting scenarios.

In two related Acquisition Decision Memoranda signed by USD (AT&L) in January and June 2011, the Global Hawk program was directed to restructure into four major subprograms: (1) Global Hawk baseline, (2) Block 30, (3) Block 40, and (4) Ground station Re-Architecture

(GSRA)/Communications System Re-Architecture (CSRA). The FY13 PB retires the Block 30 and continues development for the Block 40 program and CSRA/GSRA efforts.

The Air Force is committed to maintaining the most effective mix of capability to ensure we meet joint requirements for high altitude ISR. With this in mind, the Air Force decided to divest the Global Hawk Block 30 fleet in the FY13 PB, and extend the U-2 program. The Air Force will continue to operate the Global Hawk Block 40 and the Block 20 BACN aircraft to support joint warfighter requirements.

CV-22

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) uses the CV-22 Osprey's unique long range, speed, and vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) characteristics to provide US Special Operations Command warfighters with specialized air mobility. The CV-22 is worldwide deployable and has deployed in support of OEF, OIF and other contingencies. One AFSOC squadron is currently supporting operations in Afghanistan. In order to successfully meet the CV-22 combat and training mission requirements, the Air Force continues to fully support the program of record. The current CV-22 fleet stands at 23 aircraft with the final buy scheduled in FY14. Declaration of full operational capability will be made following the delivery of the last CV-22 in FY16.

The Joint V-22 Program Office is developing improvements to CV-22's capabilities and is focused on improving the aircraft's reliability, availability, and reducing operating costs. Improvements are currently be implemented to increase aircraft readiness. Many of these efforts are promising mean time between failure improvements of 100% or more. Particular emphasis is being placed on improving CV-22 engine time-on-wing. These development efforts will address sand ingestion problems that severely degrade engine performance and necessitate costly engine removals and repairs, a particular problem for the CV-22 which has been operating and training in harsh desert environments.

Improvements to the CV-22 are being made in block increments and each block includes a number of modification upgrades installed as they become available. Block 10/B retrofit modifications are underway to bring the oldest CV-22s to the Block 10/B configuration. Production CV-22s are now beginning to include some of the upgrades associated with the Block

20/C configuration (e.g. line of site communications modification and the MV-22 Block C modifications). Initiated in FY 2011, the Block 20 retrofit modification program will begin retrofitting CV-22s with modifications that improve operational safety, suitability, and effectiveness; correct deficiencies identified in testing and operations; improve reliability/maintainability; and enhance self-deployment capabilities.

Future modifications and improvements to the CV-22 will make the aircraft even more reliable, productive, and cost-effective; ensuring AFSOC's long range VTOL capability is available and able to provide specialized air mobility when required.

IV. Conclusion

The Air Force stands ready to win today's Joint fight as we adjust to the challenges of tomorrow. While the environment we are in necessitated difficult choices, we remain committed to working together to manage risks and determine a fiscally sound procurement, sustainment and retirement strategy to remain prepared for the current fight as we posture for the new strategic guidance. The 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 force.