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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESENTATION TO THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SUBJECT: Air Force, Fixed-Wing Tactical and Training Aircraft Programs

STATEMENT OF:

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(Acquisition, Technology & Logistics)

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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Wittman, Ranking Member Norcross, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for having us here today to provide testimony on The Department of the Air Force's (DAF) Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) President's Budget (PB) request for fixed-wing tactical and training aircraft programs.

The Department of the Air Force is critical to our national defense. Our capabilities underwrite the capabilities of the entire of the joint force, and we are uniquely suited to provide this cornerstone of the Nation's defense. This is particularly true of the long-range strike and power projection capabilities that are the purview of this subcommittee and that we will discuss today.

The Department of the Air Force's FY25 PB request reflects our commitment to developing a threat-informed, concept-driven future Air Force but resources have been limited by the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA). The FRA spending caps increase risk and force difficult tradeoffs. We have made significant progress in identifying the capabilities the DAF will need to develop and field to prevail against our adversaries. However, the DAF is facing a significant, dangerous shift in the strategic security environment. The DAF has historically adapted to key inflection points to best compete in emerging security landscapes. We must reoptimize to pivot from supporting post-9/11 conflicts and demands to deterring, and if necessary, winning, conflicts in an era of Great Power Competition (GPC).

The Secretary of the Air Force has made clear we are out of time and must reoptimize now. To achieve a more competitive posture, the DAF is implementing major changes centered on how we develop people, generate readiness, project power, and develop integrated capabilities. The Operational Imperatives work highlighted the challenges of integration and the importance of tight partnerships between the operational and acquisition communities. The capability development-related GPC organizational changes we are making at the Secretariat and Air Force Materiel Command levels institutionalizes these lessons learned. The DAF is establishing a single authoritative entity focused on identifying and prioritizing future operational capabilities, driving cross-platform mission systems integration and capability development, establishing focused acquisition Systems Centers for effective portfolio and lifecycle management, and standing up relevant Secretariat offices to inform senior leaders on

enterprise decisions. This will result in a more agile and integrated acquisition system that delivers capabilities—quickly and at scale.

Since time is of the essence in capability development we are thankful for Congress providing the Section 229 “Quick Start” provision in the FY24 NDAA and we look forward to providing information on the specific initiatives using this authority in the near future. While grateful for the support, we continue to be hampered by funding through Continuing Resolutions and restrictions on the retirement of outdated fighter, tanker, cargo, and command and control aircraft. Compromises that divert focus from our operational imperatives put our military’s ability to deliver decisive combat power at great risk. We are conscious of the difficulties associated with these changes and are eager for continued collaboration with Congress, industry, and the communities that support our Air Bases to ensure our Nation’s security.

## **CURRENT CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY**

Following National Defense Strategy (NDS) guidance, the DAF seeks to invest in technologies and field systems that are both lethal and survivable against tomorrow’s threats. This ultimately means transitioning away from many legacy platforms to free up manpower and resources to modernize and field more credible systems. If we are to modernize to address the emerging threat, we must use resources tied to our legacy platforms and weapons systems that are decreasing in relevance today and will be irrelevant in a future peer conflict. Retaining systems that have either limited contributions, or are simply not relevant in the future fight, delays modernization and exacerbates future capability gaps. If deterrence fails, our Airmen must have the training, tools, platforms, and operating systems required to win. We must strike a balance between risk in the near-term and risk in the future.

### **Fighter Force Structure**

The Air Force must continue to evolve its fighter force to meet the pacing challenge posed by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the acute threat posed by Russia and ensure the capability and capacity to meet worldwide demands today. Extensive gaming and analysis using the most difficult problem and the most difficult scenario, shows that the Air Force must adjust the future fighter force structure mix by changing investment priorities to provide the capability, capacity, and affordability required to defeat any peer threat. The threat will not allow

the Air Force to just retain and modernize our current fleets. Modernization programs cannot transform our current fourth-generation fighters into fifth-generation fighters, or our current fifth-generation fighters into Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD).

In realistic budget projections, we must balance the need for high end technology with affordable capacity. To attain this desired fighter fleet, the Air Force must continue to right size current aircraft inventories to expedite the transition away from less capable, aging aircraft and emphasize investment in future capabilities such as NGAD and F-35 modernization. The desired Air Force fighter fleet should match capability and capacity of both platforms and weapons to mission requirements. As part of its force structure change, the Air Force must transition its fighter fleet from seven platforms (i.e., F-35, F-22, F-16, F-15EX, F-15E, F-15C, A-10) to four (i.e., NGAD, F-35, F-15E/EX, F-16) plus Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA).

On the path to achieving the desired future fighter fleet, the FY25 PB continues to seek opportunities to divest capabilities that are not consistent with pacing challenges and focus on the key capabilities required to execute the NDS. Moving away from outdated and less capable legacy platforms allows us to redirect manpower to our newest aircraft/platforms, many of which require both experienced maintainers and experienced pilots to maintain our competitive edge. These divestitures are critical to building a relevant future force capable of meeting the pacing challenge. Resourcing those future capabilities and modernizing our remaining force demands both money and manpower currently tied up in our legacy systems and platforms.

### ***Fighter Force Structure Studies***

Our fighters are becoming significantly more expensive to sustain as they age. The average age of the Air Force fleet is 26 years which is significantly higher than all other Services. Weapons System Sustainment (WSS) costs have increased approximately 40% above inflation over FY16-27. We need new platforms and weapons to replace an aging force, but also must invest in cutting edge technology needed to confront and outpace threats.

Both internally and alongside the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force has performed a Tactical Aircraft (TACAIR) analysis to evaluate how efficiently different force mixes meet future warfighting challenges in the 2035-2040 timeframe. Specifically, this study focused on fighter force mixes and quantities that were both affordable and militarily effective. The Air Force TACAIR Study was an initial step in creating a long-term plan for our fighter

force. While this study was not published, it was used internally by the Air Force to inform both FY25 and future year programming efforts.

## ***Fighters***

### ***F-35***

The FY25 PB prioritizes investments in F-35 modernization, infrastructure, and advanced weapons, and commits \$5.9B to procurement, \$1.2B to development and \$2.8B to sustainment. The FY25 PB request for 42 F-35A aircraft represents a decrease of 6 aircraft from the FY24 PB position for FY25. Decreasing F-35A procurement was not an arbitrary decision. Reducing aircraft quantities enables the Air Force to fund unplanned increases to F-35 support costs without significant increases to the F-35 budget. Additionally, slowing the pace of procurement allows added flexibility for Lockheed Martin to work through the issues related to Block 4 development and integration.

Propulsion and power-thermal-management-systems-development investments help ensure capability enhancements continue to be viable for the platform as demands increase, while also reducing lifetime sustainment costs. Development funds also address a critical shortfall of F-35A flight test aircraft, which, alongside System Integration Lab (SIL) resources are major F-35 modernization enablers.

The F-35 is the cornerstone of our future fighter fleet, and as of March 2024, 409 F-35As are fielded. Although a formidable platform today, the Air Force must continue to smartly modernize the F-35A fleet to keep pace with potential adversaries on relevant timelines. The current program-wide focus remains Tech Refresh-3 (TR-3) certification and maintainability, which are the foundations for Block 4 capability upgrades and are designed specifically to compete in the highly contested fight in INDOPACOM and EUCOM.

The Air Force is committed to controlling F-35 costs for both production and sustainment, as well as maximizing mission readiness. The Lighting Sustainment Center delivers global support to U.S. Services, F-35 Partners, and Foreign Military Sales customers around the world. In response to the FY22 NDAA Section 142 mandate, the Air Force is working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of Navy, and the JPO to assume greater management, planning, and execution roles of sustainment functions, both to improve aircraft availability and further reduce sustainment costs.

## ***F-22***

The F-22 is the Joint Force's preeminent air superiority fighter and the only operational weapon system capable of countering pacing air threats at scale into the 2030s. To date, its combination of stealth, supercruise, maneuverability, and integrated avionics have given it "First Look, First Shot, First Kill" capabilities against adversary platforms, but it requires an aggressive modernization strategy to ensure continued advantage against emerging threats in highly contested environments. The FY25 PB request furthers F-22 Modernization with continued development and integration of sensor enhancements (SeE), communication systems (Link-16 and Mode 5 Challenge and Reply), navigation systems (EGI-M and Controlled Reception Pattern Antenna-CRPA), and other performance upgrades.

The FY25 RDT&E request of \$768.6M greatly expands survivability by beginning the Infra-Red Defensive Suite (IRDS) Gen III integration effort, while maintaining continued developments across the entire F-22 modernization portfolio. The FY25 procurement request of \$934.2M ramps up production of Mode 5 and Low-Drag Tanks and Pylons (LDT/P) kits that are essential to reduce fratricide potential and extend maximum combat sortie ranges and durations.

To resource these F-22 modernization efforts and invest in sixth-generation platforms (Next Generation Air Dominance), the Air Force has sought to divest F-22 Block-20 Formal Training Unit (FTU) and Test aircraft in the FY23 PB, FY24 PB, and FY25 PB. However, the 2023 NDAA prohibits divestment of F-22 aircraft through FY27. F-22 Block-20 aircraft are currently in their third decade of operations, with the highest operating costs of any Air Force fighter, and do not possess the combat capabilities resident in the F-22 Block-30/35. The Air Force remains committed to delivering air superiority to the Joint Force in the highly contested environment.

## ***F-16***

The FY25 PB reduces the F-16 total aircraft inventory (TAI) by 11 aircraft, to 830, and continues modernizing the post block fleet (i.e., Block 40/42/50/52) to improve survivability and offensive viability into 2040s, filling mission roles in conjunction with fifth- and sixth-generation fighters.

The FY25 PB requests \$107M in RDT&E to continue Operational Flight Program software updates to integrate new mission capabilities, weapons, targeting pods, and improved avionics, in support of NDS priorities.

Additionally, the FY25 PB requests \$231.9M for procurement efforts to upgrade core mission computer sub-systems to realize full Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar capabilities, replace or repair aircraft-life-limiting components, upgrade the Communications Suite to meet crypto mandates, and continue AESA radar installations. FY25 PB F-16 investments align with FY24 PB priorities and support the DAF fighter roadmap.

### ***F-15 Divestments***

In FY25, F-15C/D fleet recapitalization continues, and the Air Force plans to divest 65 F-15C/D aircraft, many of which are beyond their service life and have serious structures risks, wire chafing issues, and obsolete parts. The Air Force also begins divesting part of the F-15E fleet, retiring 26 of the older aircraft which possess the less capable, Pratt & Whitney 220-engines. F-15 divestments make way for Air Force modernization, which includes F-15EX procurement to replace the aged F-15C/D aircraft, as well as F-15 Eagle Passive/Active Warning and Survivability System (EPAWSS) procurement, to increase the F-15 fleet's capability and readiness.

### ***F-15EX***

The FY25 PB includes \$1.8B to procure 18 Lot 6 aircraft and 6 pairs of conformal fuel tanks (CFTs). The funds also support requirements for a sixth operational location, which requires investment in spare parts, support equipment, training, and other support requirements. Finally, the procurement request includes funds to stand up organic, depot-maintenance repair capabilities. This request supports a total F-15EX fleet of 98 aircraft (6 fewer than in the FY24 PB) and would bring total CFT inventory to 18 pairs (12 pairs funded in FY24), enough for one squadron.

As of January 24, the Air Force accepted six F-15EX test aircraft, located at Eglin Air Force Base. The Air Force expects to have accepted 12 F-15EXs by the end of FY24, then receive 17 in FY25, growing the inventory to 29 aircraft.

The FY25 budget contains \$56.2M in RDT&E funds to continue F-15EX non-recurring engineering (NRE) and integration development efforts, including incremental funding for the Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance System (AGCAS) and new Flight Control Computer (FCC).

- Forward fuselage redesign challenges delayed six Lot 1 aircraft deliveries. The final two Lot 1 aircraft are projected to deliver by June 24, eight months later than projected during the FY24 PB rollout, but still within the program baseline threshold.
- Cartridge/Propellant Actuated Devices (CAD/PADs) shortages, which have been mitigated through Lot 3 delivery (November 25). The Air Force and industry remain engaged to mitigate CAD/PAD risks to Lot 4 and beyond.
- Gun System shortages: DAF, Boeing, & Gen. Dynamics have collaborated to resolve the issue. All operational aircraft will deliver with their gun system installed.

#### ***F-15 Modernization (Including EPAWSS)***

The Air Force continues investments in the F-15 fleet to improve survivability and lethality within highly contested areas. The future F-15E/EX fleet will bring substantial capacity for over-sized long-range fires, sensors, and electronic warfare capabilities to complement fifth- and sixth-generation aircraft and defend critical locations.

The FY25 budget includes \$357.6M in procurement funds to order F-15 Eagle Passive/Active Warning and Survivability System (EPAWSS) kits for 21 F-15E aircraft, install EPAWSS on 14 F-15E aircraft, procure initial spares, provide for interim contractor support (repair capabilities), and support other program requirements. The procurement request also supports other F-15E system modernization, many of which are necessary to comply with National Security Agency and Federal Aviation Administration mandates. Specifically, the request funds hardware, installation, and/or interim contractor support for new or improved subsystems, which include a mission computer, tactical datalink system, radio for satellite communications, and data transfer module.

The FY25 budget includes \$178.6M in RDT&E to support F-15 annual software releases and flight test infrastructure for developmental and operational test requirements of the F-15 platform and various defense weapon systems. The annual Operational Flight Program software



updates integrate new hardware and weapons, counter emerging threats, and react to emerging safety of flight issues, preserving the F-15's survivability and lethality.

### ***A-10***

The FY25 PB does not include development or procurement requests, in accordance with the Air Force plan to divest the entire A-10 fleet by FY28 and constraints imposed by the “Sunset Clause” (10 USC Sec 2244a) prohibiting the bulk of A-10 modernization and associated procurement. Although the A-10 has limited applications to higher-tier NDS priorities and limited survivability in the evolving global threat environment, the fleet is sufficiently modernized to meet operational needs over the next five years and to operate safely through platform divestment.

### ***Next-Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) Family of Systems - Platform and Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA)***

The FY25 PB requests approximately \$3.4B to fund the development, testing, and experimentation of both NGAD and CCA, as well as CCA integration with fifth-generation crewed platforms. The CCA program will begin concept refinement for the next CCA Increment (CCA Inc 2) and explore international partnership participation.

In 2024 the Air Force will award an Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) contract for the NGAD crewed platform, and CCA will option award one or more vendors to complete detailed design, build prototypes, and test production-representative test articles. These activities, guided by a family-of-systems acquisition approach, will continue into FY25.

### ***Advanced Engine Development***

The FY25 PB request includes \$562.3M in RDT&E for development of Next Generation Adaptive Propulsion (NGAP) prototype engines. The NGAP program builds on Adaptive Engine Transition Program prototyping to further advance adaptive cycle engine performance and size scalability key to enabling future air dominance capabilities. NGAP funding supports production and test of a prototype engine by each of two contractors, preserving competition and key engine design and manufacturing skills. The program is also driving digital transformation of the propulsion industrial base to reduce future integration risks

while shortening development timelines. This continued investment in the advanced propulsion and digital transformation of the industrial base are key factors in maintaining the U.S. strategic advantages in propulsion technology and development capability over competitors and adversaries.

## **Munitions**

### ***AMRAAM***

The FY25 PB request for AMRAAM continues investment in the next generation medium and long-range air-to-air missiles. AMRAAM continues to be the Air Force's premier beyond visual range, all weather, launch and leave medium range air-to-air missile that can defend against more advanced threats in a highly contested environment. The Air Force is requesting \$447M for 462 to maximize production capacity through the future years defense program.

### ***JASSM***

The FY25 PB request for JASSM continues investment in the long-range conventional air-to-surface missiles. JASSM continues to be the Air Force's premier autonomous precision guided standoff cruise missile; able to attack fixed or relocatable targets. The FY25 PB requests \$825M of missile procurement funding for 550 missiles that supports the continued multi-year procurement strategy, initiated in FY24. In the FY25 PB the Air Force also requests \$184M of RDT&E to support the development of the B-3 and D variants of the JASSM. This funding supports Software development, Weapon Data Link (WDL) development for the JASSM-D, and weapon test and evaluation. These RDT&E efforts support fielding the B-3 and the D variants in FY27. The Air Force will continue the purchase of the M-code enabled B-3 variant, and the post-launch retargetable D variant for all future lots.

### ***LRASM***

The FY25 PB request for LRASM continues investment in the long-range conventional air-to-surface missiles against high-threat maritime targets. LRASM is highly leveraged on the design of JASSM-ER with over 70% hardware commonality and shares the same production assembly line. The Air Force requests \$354M of missile procurement funding for 64 C-1 and 51

C-3 missiles that supports the LRASM MYP and lot 9 procurement of AGM-158C and AGM-158C-3 variants. The Air Force will continue to purchase the C-3 variant in FY26 Lot 10. The LRASM AGM-158C-3 variant will be a forward fit Engineering Change Proposal (ECP) to the AGM-158C, to enhance long-range strike and existing Offensive Anti-Surface Warfare (OASuW) capability. Beginning in FY26 through the outyears, the Air Force will be procuring LRASM C-3 only, until the missile inventory objective is met. The US Navy has oversight and primary management authority for the LRASM program, to include system development, with interest from the DAF as the lead for weapons procurement and contracting.

### ***Stand-in Attack Weapon (SiAW)***

The Air Force continues to invest in technology to counter future peer threats and continues development of the Stand-in Attack Weapon (SiAW) to deliver a strike capability to defeat rapidly relocatable targets, a hallmark of the highly contested environment. SiAW is the munition that gives the F-35 unique air-to-surface capabilities in the high-end fight for the Joint Force. The FY25 PB requests \$376M for SiAW development and prototyping, along with \$173M in procurement funding to field Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile Extended Range (AARGM-ER) on the F-35 as an interim capability.

### ***Air-Launched Rapid Response Weapon (ARRW)***

The FY25 PB does not include a request for ARRW RDT&E or procurement funding. ARRW recently completed the final test of its All-Up Round executed under rapid prototyping authorities in March 2024. While future ARRW decisions are pending final analysis of all flight test data, the service is pleased to report that the ARRW rapid prototyping program is a categorical success.

Though specific test objectives cannot be provided in an unclassified forum, the test acquired valuable, unique data and was intended to further a range of programs such as ARRW and Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile (HACM). It also validated and improved the Air Force's test and evaluation capabilities for continued development of advanced hypersonic systems.

### ***Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile (HACM)***

The FY25 PB request of \$517.0M in RDT&E for the Hypersonic Attack Cruise Missile (HACM) development allows the Air Force to mature HACM through ground and flight testing, continue model-based engineering and digital ecosystem, complete critical design, and increase production readiness. Funding will support finalization of design verification testing, execution of initial qualification testing, and aircraft integration activities required for the HACM flight test campaign in FY25 through FY27 and enable production article procurement by FY27.

## **Rotary**

### ***HH-60G and HH-60W (Combat Rescue Helicopter)***

The Air Force is the only Service with a dedicated force organized, trained, and equipped to execute theater-wide Personnel Recovery. The HH-60G fleet currently accomplishes this mission by conducting day, night, and marginal weather Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) operations to recover isolated personnel in hostile or permissive environments. The planned fleet of 86 HH-60W will replace the HH-60G in this role. The FY25 PB requests \$2.1M in procurement for the HH-60G and \$52.3M in RDT&E and \$193.5M in procurement for the HH-60W program.

### ***MH-139A***

The MH-139A program is a critical element of the Air Force nuclear enterprise modernization initiative. This program will deliver 42 replacement helicopters, training devices, and associated support equipment to replace the legacy UH-1Ns for Air Force Global Strike Command. Air Force District of Washington, Fairchild AFB, WA, Kirtland AFB, NM, and Duke Field, FL, will continue to fly the UH-1Ns. The FY25 PB requests \$333.5M in procurement for the MH-139 program, which will fund Low-Rate Initial Production for eight aircraft, training devices, and support equipment. The first six aircraft continue to be used to finalize test and development. The first Low-Rate Initial Production lot will deliver 13 aircraft in FY25 and the second Low-Rate Initial Production lot will deliver 7 aircraft in FY26.

## ***CV-22***

The CV-22 is the Air Force variant of the joint V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft. It allows for long-distance, terrain following, vertical lift operations with increased survivability and is the only high-speed vertical lift platform in the Air Force inventory. The Air Force lost eight Airmen in a CV-22 Osprey mishap on November 29, 2023, off the shore of Yakushima, Japan. In response, Lieutenant General Tony Bauernfeind, Air Force Special Operations Commander, convened safety and aircraft investigation boards to determine the cause of the mishap and the tragic loss of life. On 6 December 2023, Lieutenant General Bauernfeind directed an operational stand-down of the Air Force CV-22 aircraft to mitigate risk during the mishap investigation. It has been determined that a materiel failure of a component led to the mishap. Furthermore, information from the Air Force Safety Investigation Board and an evaluation of historical data from over 750,000 V-22 flight hours identified the need for additional maintenance and procedural controls to mitigate risk. Institution of these controls and a safety focused, multi-phased approach for maintainers, aircrew, and aircraft enabled a return to flight authorization on 8 March 2024. Full operational capability of the CV-22 is expected in summer 2024. The FY25 PB requests \$84.8M to continue development and modifications to increase CV-22 fleet reliability, capability, and survivability. Investments in these areas will ensure the CV-22 fleet remains ready, reliable, and relevant in the future. Notable investments include the Block 20 Mission Computer Obsolescence Initiative to replace older mission computers and upgrades several avionics systems. Additionally, investments in Nacelle Improvement include redesigned wiring and structural improvements of the nacelles designed to increase aircraft availability by over 5%.

## **Trainers**

### ***T-1, T-6, and T-38***

The Air Force is continuing investment efforts in its legacy trainer platforms, including critical modernization programs for the T-6 and T-38 fleets. The T-1A FY25 PB request of \$0.133M in procurement funds low-cost modification efforts of the T-1A. The divestment of the T-1A fleet is currently paused until the Air Force accomplishes the guidance set forth by the FY24 NDAA. Training of future Mobility pilots and Combat System Operators, currently being conducted in the T-1A Aircraft, will be accomplished in simulators.

The T-6 FY25 PB request of \$130.2M in procurement and \$38.6M in RDT&E supports the procurement of Crash Survivable Recorders and the continued development of Avionics Replacement Program (ARP). In FY25, the T-6 will begin a major ARP to address Diminishing Manufacturing Sources and Material Shortages (DMSMS) for critical avionics issues.

Continued investments are also required for the modification and sustainment of the T-38 fleet until the T-7A becomes operational. Programs include avionics updates, and structural life extension programs such as Pacer Classic III, and the Talon Repair, Inspections, Maintenance program. The T-38 FY25 PB requests \$115.5M in procurement to support the procurement of kits that will update the T-38 avionics and extend the structural life of the T-38.

### ***T-7A***

The T-7A aircraft and simulators will fill training capability gaps for fourth- and fifth-generation fighter aircraft by replacing T-38C aircraft and simulators used in the advanced fighter/bomber track of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training, Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals, Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training, and Pilot Instructor Training. On 27 September 18, a \$9.2B fixed price contract was awarded to the Boeing Company, providing for the anticipated delivery of 351 aircraft, 46 associated training devices, and other ancillary supplies and service. The first T-7A aircraft and simulators are scheduled to arrive at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph in 2025. All undergraduate pilot training bases will eventually transition from the T-38 to the T-7A. The combination of digital engineering and early prototyping enabled the T-7A program to identify and resolve unfavorable control and handling characteristics at the early stages of development. The utilization of Boeing owned T-7 prototypes has supported the Advanced Pilot Training acquisition schedule.

The Air Force and Boeing have made significant progress in resolving the egress system and flight control law issues that led to the delay of Milestone C from FY23 to FY25. Numerous studies and re-design have led to the increased safety of the egress system and refinement of the flight control software. The program will validate the design changes by conducting a total of 22 test shots. The Air Force and Boeing will continue to work together to ensure the timely resolution of issues as the T-7A progresses through the EMD phase.

First Flight of the T-7A occurred on 28 June 23 at the Boeing facility at St Louis MO. The Air Force accepted its first EMD aircraft (APT002) on 15 September 23 and conducted its

first flight test on 20 December 23 at Edwards AFB. Since its first flight tests APT002 has conducted multiple flutter flight tests. Additionally, APT003 has completed initial climatic tests at Eglin AFB. Boeing has also delivered APT001 and it will conduct loads test at Edwards AFB. Finally, in mid FY24, the program will conduct critical High Angle of Attack flight tests using Boeing owned prototypes to validate design refinements to its flight control software. Boeing is expected to deliver the final two EMD aircraft by the end of the second quarter of FY24.

The FY25 PB request of \$83.8M in RDT&E funds the testing and development of the EMD aircrafts and Ground Based Training Systems (GBTS). Additionally, the FY25 PB request of \$277.8M in procurement funds the first seven Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) aircraft, associated spares and GBTS devices. The Air Force remains focused on working with Boeing to enable the T-7A program to achieve Milestone C.

## **Command and Control**

### ***E-7A Wedgetail***

FY25 PB includes \$417.7M to continue rapid prototyping of the first 2 E-7 aircraft in support of a production decision in FY26. To support Joint and coalition forces, the Air Force must provide a mix of space and airborne sensors and decision support capabilities for Command and Control (C2) and Airborne Moving Target Indicator (AMTI) in the air domain. AMTI investment is essential to countering advanced and emerging air threats fielded or in development by adversaries. While the E-3 lacks the capability to support high end operations and cannot be modified to close existing Airborne C2 and AMTI capability gaps, the Air Force is committed to sustaining and maintaining the remaining 16 AWACS to be operationally ready.

Boeing's proposal for the Rapid Prototyping Program was much higher than expected, so the Air Force is evaluating courses of action to determine the best way forward. At this time, Air Force's primary focus is working with Boeing to get the E-7 platform to a level of affordability the Service can prudently pursue and to successfully demonstrate the Rapid Prototyping phase of the program. Office of the Secretary of Defense and Air Force worked to rephase planned production decisions and funding to support Rapid Prototyping Program

contract negotiations and definitization efforts.

The United States Air Force, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Australian Air Force are committed to collaborating on E-7 programs for mutual benefit through cooperative capability development, evaluation and testing, interoperability, sustainment, operations, training, and safety.

### ***E-3 AWACS***

The E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft continues to be a worldwide integrated battle management command and control (BMC2) surveillance, target detection, and tracking platform. The aircraft has been in service since the mid-1970s. Due to its age and sustainability issues, the E-3 AWACS has become increasingly expensive to support. It also lacks sufficient capability and capacity to operate in a near peer conflict to meet the combatant commander needs. Divesting part of the fleet will temporarily improve sustainability by adding high demand-low availability parts back into the supply chain. As part of the previous FY23 and FY24 PBs, the Air Force divested a total of 15 AWACS aircraft, leaving a total of 16 aircraft to remain operational until its replacement, the E-7 Wedgetail, is delivered to the warfighter.

The FY25 PB requests \$67.6M in procurement to complete final modifications necessary to meet system operational mandates and address diminishing manufacturing sources as part of our commitment to ensuring E-3 AWACS mission readiness.

### ***EA-37B Compass Call***

Compass Call is the DAF's only wide-area, standoff, Airborne Electromagnetic Attack (AEA) Command and Control Warfare/Information Operations weapon system. The Compass Call program is currently undergoing a re-host effort to transition the capability from the EC-130H to the EA-37B in order to maintain U.S. Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS) Superiority in future conflicts. The EC-37B was redesignated to become the EA-37B, which better identifies the platform's mission of offensive electronic attack. The Air Force greatly appreciates the ongoing Congressional support to the Compass Call program. To date, ten EA-



37B aircraft have been procured and are at various stages of modification, with limited fielding for training only in FY25, and initial operational fielding in FY26.

With the FY25 PB, the Air Force will be focused on completing Developmental and Operational Test for the rehosted EA-37B capability, as well as furthering development of the mission system upgrade for fielding System Wide Open Reconfigurable Dynamic Architecture (SWORD-A) capabilities. The open and agile architecture of SWORD-A will enable a more rapid response capability against emerging threats and will be the foundation for future baseline upgrades.

## **Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance**

### ***MQ-9***

The FY25 PB of \$19.5M aimed at providing needed capabilities to the Combatant Commands. To date the MQ-9 fleet has flown over 3 million hours, with the vast majority of those hours supporting combat operations.

MQ-9 efforts include the continued fielding of MQ-9 Multi-Domain Operations (M2DO) capabilities improvements. Enhanced Power and Anti-jam GPS are already fielded to a portion of the fleet. The remaining focus is on completing Command and Control Resiliency and accelerating the effort as much as possible.

The FY25 PPB request continues removal of excess aircraft from the fleet between FY23-27. In FY23, the Air Force removed 100 MQ-9A Block 1 aircraft. In FY24, the remaining 48 Block 1 aircraft will be removed from the fleet and the Air Force will finalize transfer of 10 aircraft to the Marine Corps. The Air Force will remove high time Block 5 aircraft between FY26 and FY27. The AF has enough Block 5 aircraft to maintain current operations through the end of the FYDP.

### ***RQ-4 Global Hawk***

FY25 PB request focuses on maintaining the nine-airplane fleet, Multi-Platform Radar Technology Insertion Program (MP-RTIP) sensor, and ground systems at a minimum viable level until divestment. The Global Hawk will divest when replacement capabilities are available, a change from the FY24 PB request in which divestiture was scheduled for FY27.

The FY25 PB requests \$9.5M in RDT&E to support ongoing engineering and logistics effort for all Global Hawk projects required for sustainment.

### ***DAF BATTLE NETWORK***

DAF Program Executive Officer for Command, Control, Communications, and Battle Management (DAF PEO C3BM) is the acquisition lead alongside the Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) Cross-Functional Team (CFT) which is the operational lead for the development of the DAF BATTLE NETWORK, which aligns USAF & USSF command, control, and communications (C3) capabilities across 50+ core programs to fuse sensors, effectors, and sustainment grids for decision advantage. The Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) is the budget Program Element which funds key architecture development, software and applications, digital infrastructure, and aerial networking capabilities to the integration of C2 capabilities for the DAF BATTLE NETWORK.

The FY25 PB requests \$743.8M within the ABMS PE to support the continued development of the DAF BATTLE NETWORK architecture and enabling infrastructure. It allows for the additional development of a DAF architecture and analysis for relevant contested air, space and contested maritime mission threads. It also enables the design, testing and initial deployment of digital infrastructure to INDOPACOM, EUCOM and NORTHCOM delivered through five programs of record spanning the development of a software defined wide area network, deployable, mobile and fixed digital infrastructure, and deployable systems.

Additionally, the FY25 PB request supports the continued development of key Command and Control (C2) software programs, including Cloud-Based C2 (CBC2) which is currently delivering capability for homeland defense to NORAD/NORTHCOM, and two additional programs focused on the development of a common user interface for battle management command and control (BMC2) and sensor orchestration.

Finally, the FY25 PB request supports continued development of aerial networking capabilities through the Phalanx Griffon program, which will develop the technical framework to expand airborne edge networking capabilities to deliver both data and internet protocol routing between tactical aircraft and the DAF BATTLE NETWORK. These investments in FY25 will enable broader fielding of C3 capabilities in FY26 and beyond.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with this subcommittee to ensure the Department of the Air Force maintains the necessary military advantage to secure our vital national interests and support our allies and partners in Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond.