

United States Air Force



Presentation

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and Management Support

Readiness Hearing on Acquisition Reform

Witness Statement of
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I. Introduction

Chairman Ayotte, Ranking Member Kaine and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss reform of the defense acquisition system. Modernizing our weapons systems is paramount to the success of the Armed Forces. The Air Force Acquisition Enterprise is exceptionally capable and we are aligned to deliver the world's best and most advanced weapons and other capabilities both now and in the years to come.

I'd like to start by commending the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations for their October 2014 report, Defense Acquisition Reform: Where Do We Go From Here? This compilation of essays from a comprehensive range of defense acquisition professionals has been crucial to our own internal studies and reviews on what actions to take as we move forward. Particularly, the report from Dr. Paul Kaminski, currently the Chairman of the Defense Science Board and Chairman and CEO of Technovation among other Boards, and previously the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics and a retired Air Force officer, speaks to me. He simply states that "No combination of statutes, regulations and policies can ensure that major weapons systems are delivered on time, at a reasonable cost, and provide the needed capability. The acquisition system depends upon good people making good decisions involving complex issues." This declaration helps us shape the context of the improvements we continuously challenge ourselves to seek: They will not happen overnight, they require a cohesive team in agreement of the desired outcomes, and we need the collective thrust of the enterprise initiatives and sufficient stable funding to support the people as they turn the change from idealism to reality.

I would also like to highlight House Armed Services Committee (HASC) Chairman Thornberry for his recently introduced acquisition legislation. Among other things, the legislation would streamline many of our processes and improve efficiency of the acquisition system. The Department of Defense, in conjunction with the Services, provided input to Chairman Thornberry's legislation, which generally complements the Better Buying Power (BBP) initiatives and supports reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape.

Congress has been a terrific partner in helping us achieve greater acquisition successes. Of note, the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) of 1984 which stressed competition, and was further accentuated by Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act's (WSARA) emphasis on life cycle competition and prototyping to reduce development risk, contributed to many of our successes. The 1990 Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act, which established qualification standards for the workforce, as well as the more recent National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 Defense Exportability Features (DEF) to improve our ability to increase foreign military sales, also helped us get where we are today. These laws are all examples of improvements to the process aided by Congressional direction.

However, as Dr. Kaminski states, laws upon laws will not improve the acquisition process. While we believe these laws were created with the best intentions, as our processes increase in complexity, many of the statutory requirements continue to grow, resulting in duplicative and often overly cautious requirements whose burdens outweighed their values.

We have made tremendous improvements in recent years to our acquisition system; although, we still have work to do. Since my nomination as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition), I've challenged the acquisition community to achieve five priorities: Get programs right, increase transparency to external stakeholders, own the technical baseline, continue our efforts on BBP, and build our systems towards a future Air Force. All of these initiatives contribute to a stronger, cost conscious acquisition community. Within the Air Force and Department of Defense, initiatives including the Acquisition Improvement Plan (AIP) (2009), Better Buying Power (BBP) 1.0 (2010), BBP 2.0 (2012), Bending the Cost Curve (2014), and now BBP 3.0 (2015) also contributed to our successes.

We are far from reaching our fullest potential. We agree with the GAO's conclusion in their February 2015 report, DoD Should Streamline Its Decision-Making Process for Weapon Systems to Reduce Inefficiencies, which stated that the DoD can eliminate many reviews and information requirements that are no longer necessary, and streamline processes so that decision makers only review the most essential information. While we always ensure our Air Force programs receive appropriate oversight from external stakeholders, fewer documentation

requirements would allow our Program Managers (PMs) to devote more time to managing programs, rather than completing duplicative and overly burdensome paperwork. With more time devoted to actual program management, costs and schedule could improve without sacrificing technical performance.

The Air Force is committed to the Integrated Life Cycle Management (ILCM) of its weapon systems. To that end, we must address product support equities during every phase of the life cycle for all our programs. In order to ensure product support equities are in the forefront of our acquisition process, we have established a new Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Logistics and Product Support, SAF/AQD, working directly for SAF/AQ. This office is headed by an SES, two-Star equivalent, life cycle logistician with extensive experience in the sustainment community.

The establishment of SAF/AQD properly aligns Logistics and Product Support oversight across the Air Force ILCM enterprise. As you are aware, 10 USC 2337 mandates that all weapon system programs be supported by a Product Support Manager (PSM) reporting directly to the PM. The PSM's primary responsibility is to plan and develop the weapon system product support strategy. The Air Force has implemented PSMs in all of its Acquisition Category I and II program offices, and they are accomplishing excellent work. Our PSMs are integral members of the program office team and are directly advising the PM on logistics and product support issues.

Prior to the establishment of SAF/AQD, SAF/AQ lacked a senior logistics and product support advocate. SAF/AQD fills that gap and ensures SAF/AQ staff has a Senior Executive Service level logistician advocating for logistics and product support equities, as well as subject matter experts providing policy and oversight to our PSMs in the field. Additionally, SAF/AQD has the responsibility for ensuring the Air Force complies with all statutory depot maintenance requirements. This will ensure that SAF/AQ will fully consider ILCM for each of our weapons systems, including decisions that affect the future viability of our organic depots.

The Air Force's commitment to improve acquisition of our major programs is paying off. In 2013, the Air Force had no Nunn-McCurdy breaches. In 2014, the AF's sole Nunn-McCurdy breach was to the AWACS Block 40/45 program. This breach did not occur due to poor program performance, but to a reduction in the quantity of aircraft from 31 to 24 that was driven by the fiscal constraints resulting from the Budget Control Act. In fact, total program costs for the AWACS Block 40/45 program went down, but the reduction in quantity drove our unit costs above the Nunn-McCurdy threshold. Furthermore, the Air Force has had no Nunn-McCurdy breaches in 2015.

We have a number of initiatives underway to lead us into the next era of acquisition excellence:

One of my initiatives is to “Own the Technical Baseline (OTB).” OTB is essential to our future and means the government program team, independent of the prime contractor, has the wherewithal to make proper decisions to achieve successful acquisition outcomes. A few examples include a deep understanding of system and subsystem designs and architectures; the ability to conduct end-to-end performance models of the system combined with a continuous technical effort to update and validate system models using testing and engineering data; and the ability to understand and actively mitigate technology and system integration risks. In some ways, our emphasis on OTB seeks to overcome the residual undesirable effects of the acquisition workforce downsizing during the 1990’s “acquisition reform” era. This was a time when there was significant outsourcing of government capabilities and decision making to the prime contractor with a “thin” government program office.

A related initiative is to build the future Air Force by reinvigorating development planning (DP) and experimentation. Put simply, DP is a range of activities to understand the Air Force’s future warfighting needs and reconcile those with available and potential capabilities, concepts, and emerging technologies. DP will result in a credible body of knowledge to inform strategic decisions and guide future capability developments. The umbrella of DP includes requirements analysis, cost versus capability trades, modeling and simulation, rapid prototyping (both virtual and hardware), and experimentation. Experimentation is absolutely critical because it provides a means for technologists and operational personnel to conceive and co-evolve new

capability concepts along with the doctrine to effectively implement them. Experimentation will enable us to rapidly and efficiently explore uncertain futures whether emanating from the emergence of disruptive technology, new capabilities using existing systems and technologies in a new way, or the evolution of security threats from anywhere across the globe. Historically, the Air Force is credited with using DP and experimentation to drive innovation and plan its future; we are going back to our roots to re-establish this across the enterprise to produce truly innovative capabilities.

Affordability, which is an Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) initiative, challenges Air Force Core Function Leads to look at each program and determine if the Air Force can afford it throughout its lifecycle. Affordability is different in that we look at our entire portfolio across at least 30 years and evaluate if we will allocate resources far longer than the typical five year outlook. If a program is determined to be unaffordable, we restructure, we re-scope, or we cancel it. We are still in the early stages of this initiative, but we believe it is a strong approach in controlling costs and suppressing our appetites for what we cannot afford.

We are also encouraging programs to make often difficult trades in cost and capability. Where can a program reduce or eliminate a requirement without impacting the warfighter's capability, in order to save costs? These questions are never easy, but they force us as a team to determine where we are willing to decrease some functionality to save costs without sacrificing capability, and enable the Air Force to be strategically agile and deliver capabilities on time.

The Air Force also remains committed to Should Cost, which was first introduced in BBP 1.0. Should Cost is a management tool designed to proactively target cost reduction and drive productivity improvements into programs. I am pleased to announce that the Air Force's FY14 Realized Savings were \$1.4 billion. While that is a tremendous start, I continue to challenge all Program Executive Offices (PEOs) and PMs to seek out additional Should Cost opportunities, reaping as much as possible from our current portfolio.

While we have found good success in containing cost in recent years, we have been challenged in our efforts to improve schedule performance. This is a priority for Air Force

Acquisition. Our root cause analysis of the growing development cycle times we are experiencing points to the following primary contributors: Underestimation of technology risk, underestimation of software development and integration complexity, testing challenges and delays, and contracting delays. We are applying lessons learned to our new programs to avoid repeating the same miscalculations. To correct for this trend we are pursuing two strategies: Continued emphasis on sound program execution practices and implementation of Strategic Agility and Adaptability principles.

Emphasis on sound program execution is not a concept exclusive to good day-to-day program management or effective execution reviews. To be sure, these are important; however, it also requires that we initiate programs with sound acquisition strategies, fixed, well-defined and affordable requirements, properly resourced program baselines, and deliberate measures to mature critical technologies and to reduce technology and program risks.

Strategic Agility and Adaptability principles are foundational to the Air Force Strategy released last summer. The emphasis is on fielding systems more rapidly and building resilient systems that are inherently resistant to predictive failure. Hallmarks of agility/adaptability are: Modular systems, the use of block upgrade approaches to system fielding, and the use of open system architecture designs. These techniques help to shorten development cycle times, allowing for increased performance beyond legacy systems with the rapidly fielded “A-model” design of the system. Such systems are designed for later modular upgrades/enhancements (block upgrades) to the initial baseline design. The Air Force has identified Advanced Pilot Trainer (T-X) and Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System Recapitalization as strategic agility pilots that will utilize these approaches, much as Long Range Strike Bomber is already doing.

The Air Force has been on an upward trend in competition the last two years, with an increase from 36.8% in Fiscal Year 2012 to 43.5% in Fiscal Year 2014. Early Fiscal Year 2015 results indicate a probable leveling of the rate of improvement. Air Force major impediments to improvement in competition include the lack of re-procurement data for our aging weapons systems and the extent of country directed foreign military sales (FMS) procurements. The Air

Force continues to explore opportunities to enhance competition by exploring cost effective acquisition of technical data, potential breakouts of component parts, or encouraging more subcontract competition. I expect Program Executive Offices to seek competition at every opportunity and have recently instituted quarterly reports on competition status of upcoming program contracting awards. This initiative resulted in reporting and tracking of 120 weapon system requirements totaling \$60 billion, with approximately 85% of this value planned for competitive award over the next 3 years. Since the initiative began, we project approximately \$2.17 billion has shifted to the competitive environment, with more requirements moving closer to transition in the Fiscal Year 2016 timeframe. For example, our new Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) space launch strategy allows for competition between United Launch Alliance and new entrants to the EELV program as soon as the commercial launch companies can be certified for national security launches. This strategy should help to control costs and ensure multiple sources for critical launch capabilities.

In 2014, Air Force leaders initiated the Bending the Cost Curve (BTCC) Initiative to address the escalation in weapon system costs and development times. To accomplish this BTCC amplifies the Better Buying Power principles by encouraging innovation through active engagements with Industry and the acquisition workforce to identify, evaluate, and implement transformational reforms. Unlike Better Buying Power, which is a broader set of practices and techniques for the workforce to employ, “Bending the Cost Curve” is a targeted initiative to encourage innovation and active industry partnerships to improve the way we procure our systems and to drive down cost. What began as a series of discussions with industry has evolved into an ever growing set of targeted actions aimed at addressing the most critical challenges within the acquisition process.

There are three things that differentiate BTCC from other acquisition reform efforts pursued in the past: a robust and proactive collaboration with industry, a focus on prompt, tangible actions, and an emphasis on measurable results. I believe that by being able to achieve our goals, we needed an improved dialogue with industry, so we can better understand how processes, procedures, and some of the choices we make can inadvertently contribute to rising costs, the stifling of innovation, and slow processes.

Ensuring a clear and unambiguous chain of authority has been a focus of the Air Force for some time. We ensure streamlined Air Force management structures characterized by short, clearly defined lines of responsibility, authority, and accountability. Acquisition execution responsibility and authority flows from Mr. Frank Kendall, the Defense Acquisition Executive, to me, as the Service Acquisition Executive (SAE), to the PEO straight to the accountable PM. Close program schedule monitoring in the acquisition strategy allows us to ensure no one outside the acquisition execution chain exercises decision-making authority on programmatic matters. Our PMs know they are accountable for credible cost, schedule, and performance reporting and analysis to the MDA, and have responsibility and authority to accomplish objectives for the total life cycle of the program.

PMs assigned to Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAP) sign tenure agreements for four years or the closest milestone. This tenure may be tailored based on the PEO's recommendation in order to accommodate the particular needs of the program, such as significant milestones, events, or efforts. The PM is held accountable since his or her tenure does not end until those unique requirements or efforts are accomplished, which also affects their performance reports used for promotion and future assignments. In the unfortunate event of a Unit Cost Breach, there is an assessment of the current management team to ensure they are qualified to lead the program going forward. IAW 10 U.S.C. 2433 and 2433a, for Major Defense Acquisition Programs, the Secretary submits to Congress recertification that the management structure for the program is adequate to manage and control program acquisition unit cost or procurement unit cost. The same management review takes place prior to recertification of Major Automated Information Systems experiencing critical changes IAW 10 U.S.C. 2445c.

BBP 3.0 reinforces current Air Force efforts. To ensure the Enterprise is not getting in the way of PM accountability, we have performed a review of all acquisition documents and the organizations outside the acquisition execution chain who review them for coordination and approval. We are following the accountability and responsibility of the BBP 3.0-specified action to re-validate the need for organizations to coordinate or approve the documents. This

revalidation, which I will personally approve upon completion, can potentially streamline the number of individuals and organizations in the approval process; thereby, reducing unnecessary schedule delays. In addition, we are automating the document review process using the Electronic Coordination Tool (ECT), which allows us to control review times. We currently use ECT to route a program's acquisition strategy for review and will systematically load other acquisition documents into ECT.

Contractor accountability is dependent on contract type and clauses spelled out in each contract. Contractors are held monetarily accountable by absorbing overruns on fixed contracts. Contractors can also lose out on incentives built into contracts for failure to deliver. The PMs provide a Contractor Performance Assessment Report (CPAR), which is essentially the contractor's report card. The CPAR assesses a contractor's performance and provides a record, both positive and negative, on a given contract for a specific period of time. Each CPAR is based on objective facts and is supported by program and contract management data. CPAR results are a component for evaluating contractors during source selection for others contracts. We are taking the CPAR further by instituting the Superior Supplier Incentive Program (SSIP) mentioned in BBP 3.0 at the Air Force level, which is a public accountability rating for contractors. We provided SSIP ratings for industry partners earlier this year and will update the ratings in the June timeframe.

The Air Force is committed to streamlining the acquisition process to remove non-value added bureaucratic and administration requirements. We continuously review the requirements for all of our SAE Oversight Reviews to ensure we are not putting too much of a burden on the PEO and PM and taking away from their responsibility to manage the execution of the program. From these reviews we have eliminated any mandatory requirement to pre-brief the headquarters staff and SAE. We have also looked at the possibility of combining reviews when it makes sense and is appropriate. We have eliminated any requirement for PMs to travel to the Pentagon for briefings, and conduct most of our meetings via VTC. That eliminates travel time and expenses, and reduces the time required by the PM to devote to the review. We have also taken advantage of the statutory and regulatory requirements to conduct annual Configuration Steering Boards (CSBs) by encouraging programs, in addition to covering the required areas for CSBs, to bring

forward any other program issues or concerns that would benefit from a discussion by the SAE and CSB members. Another area we have addressed is to ensure that all members of our Oversight Reviews are prepared to resolve issues at meetings rather than merely discussing the issues without resolution. We have accomplished this by establishing timelines that allow the briefings to be reviewed at least a week prior to the meeting and ensuring that feedback from the Headquarters staff is provided back to the SAE, PEO and PM for their awareness in preparation for the meeting.

With regard to program documentation, we annually review the documentation requirements for programs nearing Milestone reviews. We have developed a document coordination matrix that identifies the organizations that need to be included in the coordination and approval process for every information/document requirement. The annual review ensures that the list of organizations needed to coordinate and approve does not grow beyond those organizations that have a statutory or regulatory responsibility for the information contained in any document. This practice has helped expedite our coordination process where we have a current goal of achieving Headquarters Air Force coordination/approval within 30 days of receipt of the document.

Where it is appropriate, I am a strong advocate for delegating acquisition authority to the lowest possible level. Not only does it create efficiencies, but it also empowers our leadership. Existing policies and processes for planning and executing acquisition programs provide multiple opportunities for the Service Chiefs to be involved in managing acquisition programs and to vector programs towards meeting cost, schedule, and performance targets. My regular interactions with General Welsh, including Quarterly Acquisition Program Reviews and Key Acquisition Program updates, provide him insight into how acquisition strategies and solutions are meeting the requirements of the operational forces and improve his ability to attest to requirements affordability and reduce program requirements. Further, we are working with OSD (AT&L) to delegate Milestone Decision Authority to me on Acquisition Category ID programs where appropriate, which will increase our efficiency and streamlining requirements.

Executing these priorities and in indeed, all of our efforts to achieve and maintain acquisition excellence depend on the abilities of our acquisition professionals to solve problems, manage complexity and exercise sound judgment in concert with the requirements and budget communities. So we've adopted the same continuous improvement philosophy to our acquisition workforce.

This is not a new focus for us. The Air Force has been a leader in managing its professional acquisition workforce, with an Acquisition Professional Development Program that predates the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act of 1990 (DAWIA).

The Air Force deliberately develops military and civilian acquisition professionals according to well defined career path models which serve as a guide for professional experience opportunities, education, and training. These career models provide ample opportunity and experience for acquisition professionals at all ranks, and provide a defined path to greater rank and responsibility within the acquisition workforce.

In 2002, we made a major enhancement to our talent management processes with the implementation of formal processes for "Force Development." The development of acquisition workforce members is enhanced by the use of Career Field Development Teams consisting of senior leaders from within each Career Field. Using published career path models as a guide, the Development Teams (DTs) provide tailored developmental guidance to individuals based on their past record of training, education and experiences. This action gives them a specific path or vector for greater progression and opportunity in the Air Force. The DTs also nominate officers and civilians for developmental education, including Professional Military Education, and identify military and civilian candidates for command and Materiel Leader positions within the acquisition workforce.

The Air Force also has established career field management teams at the Headquarters Air Staff level that provide strategic direction and daily oversight of the career fields, as well as managing the Developmental Team process. Under this Air Force construct, each acquisition career field is under the functional management and oversight of a senior functional leader at the

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force or Headquarters Air Force level. Talent management is a major responsibility of our general officer/Senior Executive Service level senior functional leaders as well as my Military Deputy and Principal Deputy.

The creation by Congress of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF) in the Fiscal Year 2008 NDAA represents a landmark improvement in our ability to develop and continually improve the capabilities and professionalism of our acquisition workforce. DAWDF enabled us to accelerate rebuilding the acquisition workforce after drawdowns in the '90s, and it has finally put significant, stable funding behind the training and development programs established under DAWIA. Thanks to DAWDF, we've been able to address training gaps more quickly, and we are enjoying increased training throughput capacity that has eliminated bottlenecks in the Defense Acquisition University courses that our members depend on for professional certification and currency. As a result, we've been able to increase our DAWIA certification rates significantly, from 49% at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 to 73% in December 2014.

We've also used DAWDF to address professional currency needs and gaps in acquisition technical training, building application skill courses at the Air Force Institute of Technology that complement and build on the foundational certification training provided by DAU. Examples include courses in Cost Estimating, Test and Evaluation, Developmental Planning, Human Systems Integration, Technical and Manufacturing Readiness, as well as project management and business acumen. DAWDF has also enabled us to build a robust Tuition Assistance program focused on acquisition professionals, enabling them to further their education in acquisition-related fields – a tool for increasing professionalism as well as retention.

An original focus of DAWDF was to grow and rebuild the acquisition workforce. The Air Force aggressively used DAWDF to accelerate growth hiring under our Acquisition Improvement Program and achieved the Secretary of Defense's growth target in 2012. Through the combination of growth hiring, insourcing and position re-coding, our workforce has grown from 24,417 in Fiscal Year 2008 to 34,404 at the end of Fiscal Year 2014. We continue to protect and sustain that growth (an increase of over 1500 positions) over the Future Years

Defense Program. An important and related initiative that promises to improve acquisition manpower management long term is our partnership with the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel & Services to develop manpower models that improve our ability to predict the current and future manpower requirements for acquisition program offices.

Our retention is generally very strong, but we have challenges in certain hard-to-fill locations and shortage career fields. We've secured DAWDF funds to offer retention incentives (e.g., Student Loan Repayment and Retention Allowances) to our civilian acquisition professionals when/where needed (e.g., mid-grade contracting officers and engineers). We continue to use DAWDF to improve recruiting capabilities at our acquisition centers and to ensure adequate numbers of recent college graduates are hired to renew the force. We've been able to extend our outreach and increase the availability of recruiting incentives (like Student Loan Repayment) to attract and retain talent. Overall, our reliance on DAWDF is increasing as O&M budgets shrink, and I strongly support initiatives to make DAWDF permanent.

While we are devoting considerable attention to developing business acumen, critical thinking and technical skills across the acquisition workforce, senior leader succession planning is a special focus. With the assistance of the Air Force Materiel Command and Air Force Space Command as well as my Military Deputy and Principal Deputy, I am directly involved in the management of all Key Leadership Positions and the talent management activities related to the assignment of qualified PMs and Deputy Program Managers to our ACAT I and II programs. Our recommendations are approved by the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force. Our Materiel Leader and Senior Materiel Leader qualification process incorporates additional acquisition-specific standards and is fully integrated with the Chief of Staff's Command Screening Board used to screen candidates for operational group and wing command billets.

The Air Force has implemented several steps in recent years to improve PM tenure. Most recently, we updated our Materiel Leader/Senior Materiel Leader assignment policies to mandate MDAP PM/DPM tenures of 4 years or the milestone closest to 4 years. In addition, we've charged our PEOs with the responsibility to provide the Chief of Staff and the Service

Acquisition Executive a recommended tenure, based on the particular needs of the program, at the time DPM candidates are matched to a program.

Following Mr. Kendall's OSD leadership under BBP, we've identified key leadership positions and ensured we have rigorous processes for qualifying and selecting candidates to fill these roles. I believe we have the processes, tools and resources in place to ensure members of the acquisition workforce are fully qualified to meet their responsibilities. And I can tell you that senior acquisition leaders in the Air Force consider their talent management responsibilities one of their most important duties.

As part of our efforts to improve the hiring process and reward top performers for their performance, with OSD (AT&L) support, we're working to expand the Acquisition Personnel Demonstration Project ("Acq Demo") which brings pay and performance management flexibilities, to the major acquisition centers and contracting organizations. This personnel system has been shown to facilitate more flexible hiring and pay setting, incentivize performance through contribution-based compensation, and promote retention of a high-performance workforce. SAF/SB (Small Business) and the 11th Contracting Squadron at Joint Base Andrews transitioned in 2014. Four additional organizations are scheduled to transition during Fiscal Year 2015, and more in Fiscal Year 2016. I strongly support making "Acq Demo" and Expedited Hiring Authority permanent – these authorities have been very valuable improvements to our hiring process for acquisition professionals.

I would also like to note that the GAO "sustained" protest rate for the Air Force has been consistently low. In FY14, our sustained rate was less than half of 1% (.044). Although we cannot totally preclude bid protests, we have implemented major initiatives which have been successful in reducing them. We enhanced our training for source selections, and ensure the entire team receives extensive training prior to evaluation of proposals. We emphasize the selection of proper evaluation criteria and ensure proper documentation throughout the source selection process, to ensure the decision is well-supported and can withstand scrutiny. We increased our oversight at various stages of the acquisition, and selectively offer Extended Debriefings to unsuccessful offerors for the more complex, higher-value contracts. These

debriefings provide greater transparency to the underlying factors and conclusions than the traditional debriefings. I believe these efforts to date have been instrumental in reducing our sustained protest rate.

II. Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope I have been able to convey to you some of the tremendous improvements we have been able to make to the acquisition system, although, we still have work to do to reach our fullest potential. I will continue to challenge the acquisition community to achieve the five priorities I discussed earlier: Get programs right, increase transparency to external stakeholders, own the technical baseline, continue our efforts on BBP, and build our systems towards a future Air Force. I continue to appreciate the support Congress has provided the acquisition community and look forward to working with this Subcommittee to ensure that we reach our highest goals.