

# United States Air Force

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Presentation

Before the Senate Armed Services  
Committee

## ***Air Force Posture***

Witness Statement of  
Honorable Deborah Lee James, Secretary  
of the Air Force  
General Mark A. Welsh III, Chief of Staff  
of the Air Force

March 3, 2016

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# BIOGRAPHY



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### DEBORAH LEE JAMES

Deborah Lee James is the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D.C. She is the 23rd Secretary of the Air Force and is responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, including the organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of its nearly 664,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Airmen and their families. She also oversees the Air Force's annual budget of more than \$139 billion.



Ms. James has 30 years of senior homeland and national security experience in the federal government and the private sector. Prior to her current position, Ms. James served as President of Science Applications International Corporation's Technical and Engineering Sector, where she was responsible for 8,700 employees and more than \$2 billion in revenue.

For nearly a decade, Ms. James held a variety of positions with SAIC to include Senior Vice President and Director of Homeland Security. From 2000 to 2001, she was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Business Executives for National Security, and from 1998 to 2000 she was Vice President of International Operations and Marketing at United Technologies.

During the Clinton Administration, from 1993 to 1998, Ms. James served in the Pentagon as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. In that position, she was the Secretary of Defense's senior advisor on all matters pertaining to the 1.8 million National Guard and Reserve personnel worldwide. In addition to working extensively with Congress, state governors, the business community, military associations, and international officials on National Guard and Reserve component issues, she oversaw a \$10 billion budget and supervised a 100-plus-person staff. Prior to her Senate confirmation in 1993, she served as an assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.

From 1983 to 1993, she worked as a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee, where she served as a senior advisor to the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee, the NATO Burden Sharing Panel, and the Chairman's Member Services team.

Ms. James earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative area studies from Duke University and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs.

#### EDUCATION

1979 Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative area studies, Duke University, Durham, N.C.

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1981 Master's degree in international affairs, Columbia University, N.Y.

### **CAREER CHRONOLOGY**

1. 1983 - 1993, Professional Staff Member, Armed Services Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.
2. 1993 - 1998, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C.
3. 1999 - 2000, Vice President of International Operations and Marketing, United Technologies, Washington, D.C.
4. 2000 - 2001, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Business Executives for National Security, Washington, D.C.
5. 2002 - 2013, Senior Vice President and Director for Homeland Security; Senior Vice President, C4IT Business Unit General Manager; Executive Vice President, Communications and Government Affairs; President, Technical and Engineering Sector, Science Applications International Corporation, McLean, Va.
6. 2013 - present, Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D.C.

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### GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III is Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 664,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

General Welsh was born in San Antonio, Texas. He entered the Air Force in June 1976 as a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has been assigned to numerous operational, command and staff positions. Prior to his current position, he was Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe.



#### EDUCATION

- 1976 Bachelor of Science degree, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 1984 Squadron Officer School, by correspondence
- 1986 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence
- 1987 Master of Science degree in computer resource management, Webster University
- 1988 Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
- 1990 Air War College, by correspondence
- 1993 National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
- 1995 Fellow, Seminar XXI, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
- 1998 Fellow, National Security Studies Program, Syracuse University and Johns Hopkins University, Syracuse, N.Y.
- 1999 Fellow, Ukrainian Security Studies, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- 2002 The General Manager Program, Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- 2009 Fellow, Pinnacle Course, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
- 2009 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

1. August 1976 - July 1977, Student, undergraduate pilot training, Williams Air Force Base, Ariz.
2. July 1977- January 1981, T-37 Instructor Pilot and Class Commander, Williams AFB, Ariz.
3. January 1981 - May 1981, Student, fighter lead-in training, Holloman AFB, N.M.
4. May 1981 - August 1981, Student, A-10 training, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
5. August 1981 - May 1984, Instructor pilot, Flight Commander and Wing Standardization and Evaluation Flight

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- Examiner, 78th Tactical Fighter Squadron and 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, Royal Air Force Woodbridge, England
6. May 1984 - June 1987, Commander, Cadet Squadron 5, later, Executive Officer to the Commandant of Cadets, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
  7. June 1987 - June 1988, Student, Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
  8. June 1988 - October 1988, Student, F-16 conversion training, Luke AFB, Ariz.
  9. October 1988 - July 1992, Operations Officer, 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron, later, Commander, 4th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah
  10. July 1992 - June 1993, Student, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
  11. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
  12. June 1995 - April 1997, Commander, 347th Operations Group, Moody AFB, Ga.
  13. April 1997 - June 1998, Commander, 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea
  14. June 1998 - June 1999, Commander, College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
  15. June 1999 - September 2001, Commandant of Cadets and Commander, 34th Training Wing, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
  16. September 2001 - April 2003, Director of Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
  17. April 2003 - June 2005, Director of Global Power Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
  18. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.
  19. July 2007 - August 2008, Vice Commander, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas
  20. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for Military Support/Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C.
  21. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base, Germany; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
  22. August 2012 - present, Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

### **SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS**

1. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as a lieutenant colonel and a colonel
2. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C., as a major general
3. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., as a major general and a lieutenant general
4. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as a general

### **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: command pilot

Flight hours: more than 3,300

Aircraft flown: F-16, A-10, T-37 and TG-7A

### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Defense Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster

Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster

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Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster  
Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster  
Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster  
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters  
Air Medal with oak leaf cluster  
Aerial Achievement Medal  
Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Air Force Commendation Medal

**EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant June 2, 1976  
First Lieutenant June 2, 1978  
Captain June 2, 1980  
Major May 1, 1985  
Lieutenant Colonel June 1, 1989  
Colonel Feb. 1, 1994  
Brigadier General Aug. 1, 2000  
Major General Aug. 1, 2003  
Lieutenant General Dec. 9, 2008  
General Dec. 13, 2010

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## **I. INTRODUCTION: THE WORLD'S GREATEST AIR FORCE**

The United States Air Force remains the greatest air force on the planet. We are powered by Airmen with more talent and education than ever before. Our inventory, although aging, continues to be more capable across the enterprise than any Nation in the world. Together with our Joint and Coalition partners, Airmen provide around-the-clock *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* in defense of our Nation and our Allies. They are also vital to the most integrated Joint, Coalition and partner relationships in our history—even better than during the incredible combined success of Operation DESERT STORM 25 years ago.

However, we are experiencing a colossal shift in the geopolitical landscape. For the first time in a generation, adversaries are boldly challenging America's freedom of maneuver in air, space, and cyberspace in contested regions and near our Allies' borders. The era in which the United States could project military power without challenge has ended. Indeed, China has been increasing its military capability and is now expanding its grip on the Pacific. This compounds the risk of miscalculation or conflict in the region. Russia has attempted to annex Crimea and continues its aggression in Ukraine further pressuring the NATO alliance. At the same time, Russian and American Air Forces are both conducting offensive military operations in Syrian airspace. An unpredictable North Korea continues to conduct nuclear and ballistic missiles tests in the face of international condemnation. Syria and Iran have purchased one of the world's most capable air defense systems from their Russian ally while continuing to oppose our interests in the region. These challenges further complicate a relentless fight against Violent Extremist Organizations seeking to exploit weak governance and disrupt world order. The past two years are a reminder that stability is not the natural state of the international environment, that peace is not self-perpetuating, and that entire regions can suddenly descend into anarchy.

While the world's expectations of American airpower were shaped by Operation DESERT STORM, our near-peer adversaries responded to that victory by modernizing their forces with systems specifically designed to neutralize our strengths. Satellite-enabled precision, stealth, cruise missiles, and other military technology that debuted in DESERT STORM are now proliferating around the globe. Quite simply, our adversaries have gained unprecedented ground in just 25 years. In contrast, prior to 1992, the Air Force procured an average of 200 fighter aircraft per year. In the two and a half decades since, curtailed modernization has resulted in the procurement of less than an average of 25 fighters yearly. In short, the technology and capability gaps between America and our adversaries are closing dangerously fast. As our challengers employ increasingly sophisticated, capable, and lethal systems, your Air Force must modernize to deter, deny, and decisively defeat any actor that threatens the homeland and our

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national interests. This modern force hinges upon the globe's finest Airmen. We will develop these Airmen through world-class education and training so they are prepared for 21st century combat.

The Fiscal Year 2017 President's Budget aims to build, train, and equip an Air Force capable of responding to today's and tomorrow's threats. It balances capacity, capability, and readiness in support of a resource-informed Service strategy that Takes Care of People, Strikes the Right Balance Between Readiness and Modernization, and Makes Every Dollar Count. *Congressional support for our budget, built in accordance with Air Force and National Strategy, will keep us on a path of disciplined modernization and begin to arrest the erosion of our competitive advantage while continuing to defend America's interests wherever they are challenged.*

## **II. GLOBAL VIGILANCE, REACH, AND POWER FOR AMERICA... DAILY**

Our Joint Force's strength and depth is a coercive instrument deliberately designed to deter, and if necessary, compel, our adversaries. We provide a broad range of military options for America. However, phenomenal Airmen, combined with airpower's speed, agility, and flexibility, often make your Air Force a preferred employment option, for missions ranging from humanitarian relief to armed intervention.

Today, in our 25th consecutive year of combat operations, your Air Force provides the preponderance of combat force against Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. We monitor these organizations with an unblinking eye and a 34,000-person intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) enterprise dedicated to analyzing and disseminating intelligence to empower decision-makers, identify targets, enable air strikes, and protect Joint and Coalition forces. We have flown more than 30,000 sorties in Iraq and Syria since August 2014, including two-thirds of the 9,000 Coalition airstrikes and more than 90 percent of the 19,000 Coalition tanker sorties. In short, your Air Force is leading the campaign to degrade and destroy VEOs who seek to upend world order.

Additionally, when Russian forces challenged the security and territorial integrity of European nations on its periphery, American Airmen joined our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines to present a united stand against Russian aggression with our NATO allies. Deployed combat and mobility air forces, ISR and space platforms, and cyberspace assets spearheaded a persistent and dominant air, land, and sea presence in the region. While strengthening this vital alliance, we are also building non-NATO partner capability in support of the European Reassurance Initiative.

At the same time, we are projecting power in the Pacific because China's defense spending continues to grow at double-digit rates as they fund and field an impressive array of modern weapons supporting a more assertive regional strategy. Thus, as China attempts to expand its claims in the South China Sea and coerce our Pacific partners, your Airmen are projecting power through a continuous bomber presence and



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by conducting reconnaissance operations in the region. We are preventing strategic surprise, bolstering freedom of maneuver and freedom of navigation for the Joint Force, and protecting the global commons.

Airmen around the globe protect American interests...daily. At U.S. Central Command's Combined Air Operations Center, Airmen lead Joint operations throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Horn of Africa. We have nearly 20,000 Active Duty Airmen stationed in Japan and on the Korean Peninsula, where we fly regularly with our Pacific partners. More than 23,000 Total Force Airmen around the globe conduct operations in and through space and cyberspace supporting the Joint Force. Your Air Force supported 25 space missions, provided GPS, weather, communications, and Space Situational Awareness capabilities while tracking over 23,000 objects orbiting the Earth. We flew nearly 1.7 million hours in 2015, equal to 194 continuous years of flying. We moved nearly a million passengers, the equivalent of every man, woman, and child in Montana. Air Force aerial refuelers passed more than 1.2 billion pounds of fuel and our mobility aircraft airlifted 345,000 tons of cargo and evacuated more than 4,300 Joint patients—all in support of the Joint Force and our international partners.

There is no mission more critical than maintaining our Nation's nuclear capability. Your Airmen operate two of the three legs of our Nation's nuclear triad and continue to improve the nuclear enterprise, providing the deterrence that keeps America's most lethal threats at bay. The responsiveness of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and the flexibility of the bomber underwrite U.S. national security. More than 35,000 Airmen protect our national interests and those of our Allies by ensuring a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear deterrent. Your nuclear forces ensure strategic stability with other nuclear powers and provide a wide range of options to deter strategic attacks and respond to emerging threats.

Lastly, programs like *Airmen Powered by Innovation* and *Every Dollar Counts* encourage Airmen to take ownership of day-to-day processes and improve our business practices. These campaigns have yielded billions of dollars in savings and cost avoidance over the last two years. These funds are then reinvested in readiness and modernization.

Today's Airmen—*your* Airmen—are dedicated to innovation, accomplishing their mission, and building a better Air Force for tomorrow... all while supporting and defending our Constitution and protecting our Nation.

### **III. A CRUCIAL MOMENT: THE DYNAMIC, COMPLEX FUTURE IS UPON US NOW**

While our Airmen remain heavily engaged around the world, the average age of our aircraft is at an all-time high, and the size of our force and state of our full-spectrum readiness are at or near all-time lows. Non-stop combat since Operation DESERT STORM has placed a substantial burden on our Airmen and

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their families while straining the readiness of our personnel and the systems they operate. Without question, the U.S. Air Force America remembers from 1991 is now shockingly smaller and older: 25 years ago, we had 134 combat-coded fighter squadrons while today we have 55; we had 946,000 Total Force military and civilian Airmen while today we have fewer than 660,000. If World War II's B-17 bomber had flown in DESERT STORM, it would have been younger than the B-52, KC-135 and the U-2 are today.

Despite America's inherent strategic advantages, challengers are quickly closing the capability and technology gaps between us. Tools that were unaffordable to most nations during the DESERT STORM era, such as computing power, nuclear weapons, cruise and theater ballistic missiles, and other precision guided munitions have decreased in cost and continue to proliferate. Sophisticated air defense systems are becoming the norm. Furthermore, the declining cost of defense is outpacing the rising cost of offense, challenging your Air Force's ability to present an effective conventional deterrent. The bold and deadly actions taken by revisionist powers in the last five years would have been unimaginable just a decade ago. Deteriorating military strength is an invitation for conflict as rising or unstable powers seek to gain from our eroding competitive advantage.

We must counter these challenges. This requires agile Airmen who we trained and equipped for all possible scenarios with modernized weapons systems and infrastructure where it counts the most. We remain grateful for recent budgetary relief from the Budget Control Act (BCA) caps in Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, but Fiscal Year 2018 and beyond will return us to inadequate funding to carry out the National Military Strategy. Uncertain future budget topline make it difficult to deliberately balance investments to modernize, recover readiness, right-size the force, and win today's fight.

Our rapidly shrinking advantage over competitors is the result of their increasing investment in areas designed to blunt our strengths combined with our limited funding and that of our Allies and partners. In fact, our forecasts from five years ago reflected we would have greater funding and fewer combat requirements than we are experiencing today. The combined strategic challenges of international financial turbulence, tenacious violence in the Middle East, and more ambitious great power actors have created a gap between the funding we need and the funding we receive.

Combat requirements since 2001 have created an imbalance due to a necessary focus on operations in relatively permissive environments. However, that does not relieve the Air Force from our obligation to be ready—*always*—to deter or defeat an adversary in a conflict where air superiority must be fought for and maintained instead of expected at the outset. Our Joint Force has enjoyed uninterrupted Air Superiority since April 1953—the result of realistic training and wise investments. Despite our

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outstanding aviators, maintaining Air Superiority while flying 20th century aircraft against 21st century enemy air defenses represents a strategic mismatch. The Fiscal Year 2017 PB works to correct this, but in order to ensure we have the capacity for today's operations, we curtailed F-35 procurement and delayed some 4th generation modifications necessary to keep our aging fleet relevant against all foes. The longer we are forced to delay modernization, the more we jeopardize our ability to dominate full-spectrum conflicts. This is a risk we must not take. Although we provide world-class intelligence collection, rapid global mobility, air and space superiority, command and control, and global precision attack, your Air Force's future as a full-spectrum war-fighting force is in danger without substantial modernization.

#### **IV. A CALL TO THE FUTURE**

America is an air and space power nation. In an historic anomaly lasting 25 years, the U.S. has possessed unparalleled dominance in the air and in space, enabling a generation of Airmen to focus almost exclusively on operations against non-state threats in permissive air environments. However, dominance is not an American birthright, and air, space, and cyberspace superiority are not American entitlements. Without the ability to achieve national security objectives in air, space, and cyberspace—all under-written by a strong and reliable strategic nuclear deterrent—America's influence will diminish and the Joint Force will be forced to radically change how it goes to war. American lives may needlessly be put in danger and our leaders' options will be limited.

Air forces that fall behind the technology curve fail, and if the Air Force fails, the Joint Force fails. Your Air Force understands balancing combat capability, capacity, and full-spectrum readiness is a strategic imperative. While balancing today's combat requirements, maintaining readiness, and growing our endstrength, we must simultaneously modernize in order to halt the erosion of our technology and capability advantages. In the Fiscal Year 2017 PB, we made difficult choices to best achieve this needed balance. However, to successfully execute the PB, we need your help to ensure we have the appropriate funding, the flexibility to execute the choices we are presenting, and long-term budget stability. We also request the repeal of the BCA which increases the risk to the Nation and our Allies.

In order to create a consistent plan for our Service, we built a Strategic Framework that ensures our budgetary decisions are based on strategy. The core of this framework is a family of strategic documents describing the expected future environment, our Service core missions, how your Air Force will accomplish those missions 20 years from now, and what we need to focus on during this future years defense program (FYDP) to meet that strategy. The PB is built upon this resource-informed Strategic Framework, and it continues our efforts to "right the force" after Fiscal Year 2013's sequestration. This

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Strategic Framework and our three priorities of Taking Care of People, Balancing Readiness and Modernization, and Making Every Dollar Count are the foundation of the Fiscal Year 2017 PB.

Our strategy-driven Fiscal Year 2017 PB is consistent with last year's PB and offers the best balance for America's current and future air, space, and cyberspace requirements at Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA)-level funding. It is designed to synchronize budget and acquisition decisions with strategy and provide a continuing advantage against competitors across the range of military operations despite the modernization slowdown necessary to continue current operations. It is credible, affordable, and executable—if we're allowed to execute where we have requested.

Despite a BBA that resulted in a lower-than-expected Fiscal Year 2017 PB, your Air Force will support the Nation's defense strategy and the most urgent Combatant Commander requests. The Fiscal Year 2017 PB is the result of difficult, purposeful, strategy-centric resourcing decisions made to meet obligations set in Defense Strategic Guidance. It aligns with Department of Defense and Air Force 30-year strategies and continues to gain ground in our ability to wage full-spectrum operations. It maximizes the contributions of the Total Force and reinforces investments in nuclear deterrence, space control, and cyberspace operations. It emphasizes global, long-range, and non-permissive capabilities and focuses on unique capabilities the Air Force provides to the Joint Force. It invests in our most precious resource—people—by growing our active force back to 317,000 Airmen by the end of Fiscal Year 2016. As part of our initiative to right-size our force, we also will right-shape our force by maximizing selective retention bonuses to address skilled manning shortages. We will take care of our incredible Airmen and protect our most important family programs by continuing to fully fund Military Tuition Assistance, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response programs, and Airmen Family Readiness Centers.

In addition to right-sizing our Service for today's demands, the Fiscal Year 2017 PB continues our efforts to balance readiness and modernization despite funding challenges. This PB includes a \$6.5 billion investment in Nuclear Deterrence Operations, an increase of \$4.3 billion over the FYDP compared to the Fiscal Year 2016 PB. This investment includes modernizing nuclear command and control, replacing outdated and unsupportable Minuteman III ICBM equipment, and building the Ground Based Strategic Deterrence program to begin replacing the aging Minuteman III in the late 2020s. We are also developing the Long-Range Standoff weapon which will provide the Joint Force with a survivable air-launched weapon capable of destroying otherwise inaccessible targets in any zone of conflict.

Additionally, we intend to delay the A-10 and EC-130 retirements to maintain capacity in support of today's operations. We will fund flying hours to their maximum executable level, invest in weapon system sustainment, and ensure combat exercises like Red Flag and Green Flag remain strong. We will

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continue our top three recapitalization programs, though we have made the difficult decision to slow F-35 procurement. We will resource strategic assets such as the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) to detect global missile launches. We will also invest in preferred munitions capacity and the Combat Rescue Helicopter recapitalization program while continuing to grow from 26 Cyber Mission Force Teams to 39. Lastly, we will fund improvements to Global Integrated ISR with a focus on the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) enterprise. These include increased benefits for aircrew, a program to train enlisted operators to fly the RQ-4 Global Hawk, a basing study to provide options to support flying RPAs on a schedule more conducive to steady-state operations, and other recommendations from our Culture and Process Improvement Program, a bottom-up review of issues impacting our RPA force.

The BBA has forced us to make sacrifices as we balance readiness and modernization. In this case, we must delay five F-35s and slow modernization of our 4th-generation aircraft. With increased funding, we would invest in these capabilities now to ensure they do not compete for funding with critical nuclear and space requirements in the out-years. Just as importantly, we must delay investment in aging critical infrastructure such as ranges, airfields, and taxiways, an action we have repeated annually since Fiscal Year 2013 sequestration. Every year we delay these repairs, operations are affected and the eventual cost of improvements grows substantially.

Importantly, this budget must mark the return of a committed investment to *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America. A return to BCA-level funding in Fiscal Year 2018 will undermine our readiness and modernization; it will require your Air Force to depart from a long-term, Strategic Framework in favor of a course of action that funds only things absolutely required in the short-term. It will abet our challengers' efforts to further erode our capability and technology advantages, and we will be forced to slow our modernization programs, delaying our planned readiness recovery. A return to BCA-level funding will limit our space, cyberspace, and nuclear improvements and further degrade Air Force-wide infrastructure and installation support. It is critical that the looming threat of sequestration ends. BCA-mandated across-the-board defense cuts will act as a straitjacket, preventing the department from reallocating funds to the most critical capabilities and investments at the very moment such flexibility is paramount. This will result in significant strategic risk and greater cost over the long run. Fiscal Year 2017 represents a critical point when the Air Force can continue to "right the force" in terms of size, capacity, readiness, and present/future capabilities. Alternatively, Fiscal Year 2017 could simply represent temporary relief before inadequate future BCA-level funding thwarts modernization and readiness initiatives. Make no mistake, BCA-level funding will result in longer timelines to meet Joint Force objectives; this could result in increased risk to mission and service members.

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Our Nation requires bold leadership from the Congress. Your Air Force needs the authority and flexibility to execute our strategy through Congressional support of the Fiscal Year 2017 PB. We appreciate the BCA relief provided by the 2015 BBA, but responsibly sustaining and investing in U.S. security requires long-term budget stability and the repeal of BCA. Critically, even at BBA funding levels, the overall capability gap between us and our competitors will continue to narrow; we can preserve the advantages in some areas, but determined adversaries will close gaps in others. Accordingly, we are prioritizing the Joint Force requirements our Nation needs the most.

## **V. CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ACTION**

Today's national security challenges come from a combination of strong states that are challenging world order, weak states that cannot preserve order, and poorly governed spaces that provide sanctuary to extremists who seek to destabilize the globe. The world needs a strong American Joint Force, and the Air Force is its first and most agile responder in times of crisis, contingency, and conflict. The Joint Force depends upon Air Force capabilities and requires airpower at the beginning, the middle, and the end of every Joint operation. As our Army and Marine Corps get smaller, they do not want less airlift; they want it to be more responsive. As Combatant Commanders look toward battlefields of the future, they do not want less ISR; they need *more* persistent, capable, and agile ISR. Should our Nation find itself in another conflict requiring boots on the ground, we have the responsibility to assure air superiority so American Soldiers and Marines may keep their eyes on their enemies on the ground rather than concern themselves with enemy airpower overhead. America's Air Force must be able to disrupt, degrade, or destroy any target in the world, quickly and precisely, with conventional or nuclear weapons, to deter and win our Nation's wars. Undoubtedly, decisive air, space, and cyberspace power—and the ability to command and control these forces—have become the oxygen the Joint Force breathes and are fundamental to American security and Joint operations. Whether in support of global counter-terror operations or great power deterrence, your Air Force remains constantly committed, as we have without respite for the past 25 years.

In the face of a dynamic, complex, and unpredictable future, your Airmen provide a strategic advantage over America's competitors. They are educated, innovative, and motivated. Their ability to see threats, reach threats, and strike threats is an effective but shrinking conventional deterrent against America's enemies. These courageous Airmen, when properly trained, effectively equipped, and instilled with the trust of their leadership, will ensure the Air Force continues to overmatch opponents in Joint and Coalition operations and defend the United States from any who would do us harm.

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The Fiscal Year 2017 President's Budget—and the flexibility to execute it as we have recommended—is an investment in the Air Force our Nation needs. The global developments of the last five years have reminded us that America's Air Force must have the capability to engage anytime, anywhere, and across the full spectrum of conflict all while providing a reliable strategic nuclear deterrent. America expects it, Combatant Commanders require it, and with your support, our Airmen will deliver it.