

**Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
Air Force Budget Hearing
March 26, 2014
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Good morning. The Committee will come to order.

We gather this morning to take testimony on the Air Force budget request for fiscal year 2015.

I want to welcome Secretary James in her first appearance before the subcommittee. Secretary James has a diverse background with extensive experience in the Pentagon, in industry, and on Capitol Hill. We look forward to working with you.

General Welsh is making his second appearance before the subcommittee. General, welcome back.

“Airpower is vital to the Department’s ability to project power globally and to rapidly respond to contingencies. The Air Force brings capabilities critical to national security in the air, in space, and in cyberspace and will continue to improve performance in each. We will incorporate next generation equipment and concepts into the force to address sophisticated threats. Key priorities include continuing plans to field a new generation of combat aircraft and making advancements in cyber capabilities, avionics, weapons, tactics, and training.”

These are not my words. They come directly from the Quadrennial Defense Review and they illustrate the tough decisions the Air Force will have to make balancing current readiness with future modernization.

The Committee also has some tough decisions to make in coming weeks and this morning we’re anxious to know from our witnesses:

- Where our Air Force is going with its nuclear mission?
- with the F-35 procurement;
- with the KC-46 tanker program
- with the Combat Rescue Helicopter;
- the next generation J-STARS platform;
- the proposed Long Range Strike bomber;
- the role of UAVs and
- the competition between the U-2 and the Global Hawk;
- with high altitude ISR and other military satellites;
- and the role and size of the Air Guard and Reserves;

We also must seek your views on military modernization in China and the threat posed by the Russian Federation and transnational terrorists.

As the QDR said, “Airpower IS vital” to defending America and American interests and we need to know how the Air Force is preparing itself to meet current and future threats in an increasingly dangerous world.

I now would like to recognize the ranking member, Mr. Visclosky, for any opening remarks he would like to make.

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