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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: Status Update on Resolution of the Findings and Recommendations  
of the 2014 Department of Defense Nuclear Enterprise Review

STATEMENT OF: Major General Jack Weinstein, Commander  
Twentieth Air Force

June 25, 2015

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Hartzler, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished Members of the Committee; thank you for allowing me to appear before you and represent the over 10,000 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) professionals of Twentieth Air Force.

## **Strategic Importance**

The Nation's ICBM force provides a credible, around-the-clock nuclear deterrent, poised and ready if called upon by the President to conduct rapid, accurate and decisive global strike. Every day, over 900 Airmen deploy to launch facilities and missile alert facilities across a 33,600 square mile area of responsibility in Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming to operate, secure, sustain and support 450 Minuteman III (MMIII) ICBMs. The responsive nature of ICBMs, in concert with the survivable nature of our ballistic missile submarines and the flexibility and visibility of our nuclear capable bombers, provides the President with a safe, secure and effective nuclear force vital to strategic deterrence in the 21st century.

## **Overview of Nuclear Enterprise Studies**

In the first half of 2014, following a series of missteps in the nuclear enterprise, the Department of Defense and Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) conducted several studies to identify problems and provide recommendations for improvement. I am particularly grateful to Secretary James, General Welsh, and my boss, AFGSC commander Lieutenant General Stephen Wilson, for allocating \$160 million during FY14 and \$150 million in FY15 to address the recommendations of the Nuclear Enterprise Review (NER). With these funds, the Air Force addressed numerous shortfalls to include critical spare parts for ICBM infrastructure, new vehicles suitable for our operating environment, funding over 700 billets to relieve manning shortfalls and procuring Operational Camouflage Pattern uniforms to provide a tactical advantage for our nuclear security professionals. To relieve administrative burdens on the force, we restored the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP) as a commander's program to ensure Airmen are fit for nuclear duty. This spring, AFGSC established a Leadership Development Center (LDC) to develop Airmen at all levels as nuclear leaders and professionals. This is not an all-inclusive list but clearly represents the Air Force's focus that the nuclear mission is the number one priority.

## **Actions To Date**

As the commander of the operational ICBM force, my focus has been and continues to be rebuilding culture and improving morale as identified in the NER. As many of you know, culture change is difficult, non-linear and takes time. So over the past 18 months I've consistently reinforced the steps we must take to improve.

Beginning last spring, I released ten Leadership Vector memorandums to immediately address, among other topics, the need to empower Airmen at all levels and instill a culture of respect and critical self-assessment. Also, I hosted two symposiums with senior officer and enlisted leaders from all three missile wings to mentor them and define our future actions.

In January 2015, we published the Task Force 214 and Twentieth Air Force Strategic Narrative to further set the tone for rebuilding the ICBM culture and provide an enduring guidepost for continued improvements in the ICBM mission. I continue to remind my commanders that all of our efforts must reflect back on and uphold the ideals in the narrative. My staff is currently developing a comprehensive Campaign Plan that will define our milestones in the coming years to achieve the ideals outlined in the Strategic Narrative.

We modified several operational processes to put into practice these culture change ideals. First, we implemented a "3+3" operational tour construct for our missile operators. These officers now serve their first three-year assignment focusing on developing their weapon system proficiency. After this initial tour, the majority will transfer to another missile wing where they will assume greater responsibility and leadership as instructors, evaluators and/or flight commanders.

We also reorganized our training and evaluation programs to eliminate the blurred lines between the two. Practical application in our simulator is now our main instrument of training, not written tests. Further, we placed instructors in the squadron which has led to more robust individually focused training of missile officers.

More robust training has enabled us to place authority and responsibility back into the hands of those who perform the mission every day. By providing the proper tools and empowering our Airmen to make decisions, we are developing our Airmen not just as technical experts but as leaders.

Throughout our ICBM wings, group and wing commanders are “leading from the front” by requalifying in the weapon system and standing alert alongside their junior Airmen, serving as an example while coaching, training and mentoring them in the operational environment.

While AFGSC is standing up the LDC for professional development, we increased the number of ICBM specific courses at our own ICBM Center of Excellence. This training provides all of our Airmen with increased weapon system knowledge and detailed instruction on how to train and evaluate. Additionally, we have connected with our nuclear mission partners to give our Airmen the opportunity to visit national command centers, Department of Energy facilities, maintenance depots and witness firsthand MMIII test launches to broaden their professional development.

In March, we activated the 582d Helicopter Group. The unit not only provides an aviation-focused chain of command to three helicopter squadrons and an operations support squadron, but adds a senior leadership position for aspiring ICBM-savvy aviators. Having an experienced nuclear aviator, alongside our ICBM operations, maintenance and security forces group commanders, advising and providing technical expertise on helicopter operations substantially enhances our ability to execute the ICBM mission as an integrated team.

Finally, we are implementing the Deputy Secretary of Defense’s decision to use revised security forces guidance to meet the requirements of a personnel reliability assurance program in lieu of PRP for our Defenders. This action provides a wider range of career opportunities for our security forces Airmen without compromising nuclear security or reducing the standards already in place.

## **Conclusion**

As we fully implement resource and programmatic improvements to the ICBM mission, we will continue to rebuild the ICBM culture that is vital to continuing and enduring improvement. We will continue to listen to our front line Airmen for their feedback on what we have done and what else we can do to improve the ICBM mission. We’re deeply committed to becoming a more operationally-focused force and a learning organization that values and respects the contributions of Airmen across the mission.