

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

MARCH 15, 2018

Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Tsongas, and distinguished members of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you today to augment the discussion on the Air Force Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Budget Request for Airborne Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Programs. The programs you are inquiring about are of vital importance to supporting Combatant Commanders and the joint warfighter.

In the invitation to testify, the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee identified specific topics for discussion during the hearing, and we hope the dialogue today will impart a greater understanding to all present as to the Joint Staff's role in validating requirements and allocating ISR.

A central theme of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) is the reemergence of long-term strategic competition in a world where our competitive military advantage is eroding. It is against this backdrop that the Department of Defense (DoD) must make difficult choices to ensure we continue to field a lethal, resilient, and adaptable Joint Force that is aligned with the strategic environment and the growing threats within it.

One of the key capabilities that has supported U.S. military dominance for many years is the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System also known as JSTARS. JSTARS has provided Battle Management Command and Control (BMC2), Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), and communications capabilities to the Joint Force since it was originally deployed in 1991 as a part of Operation Desert Storm. A key piece of JSTARS-provided ISR data is Ground Moving Target Indicator (GMTI) information that helps us conduct wide-area

surveillance of mobile ground targets. The JSTARS E-8C aircraft is a modified Boeing 707-300 with individual airframes dating back as far as the 1960s. As these aircraft have aged, availability rates have fallen and sustainment costs continue to rise. These trends led the Air Force to initiate a JSTARS Recapitalization (Recap) effort to ensure the Joint Force would have JSTARS-like capabilities well into the future. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) validated both an Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) in 2013 and a Capability Development Document (CDD) in 2016 which form the basis of the capability requirements for the JSTARS Recap program. JSTARS Recap requirements are focused on providing a similar capability set to the original JSTARS program on a commercially-derived business jet-class aircraft.

Changes in the threat environment, however, call into question the viability of the JSTARS Recap program. While the ability to collect wide-area GMTI data and conduct BMC2 remain key Joint Force requirements, JSTARS Recap will be unable to satisfy these requirements in a highly contested, wartime environment. As the NDS states, “we cannot expect success fighting tomorrow’s conflicts with yesterday’s weapons or equipment.”

In December of last year, mindful of the evolving threat environment and new strategic direction, the Air Force approached the JROC with its proposal to re-allocate JSTARS Recap funding to help accelerate fielding of the Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS). ABMS is envisioned to provide JSTARS-like capabilities via a net-centric (vice aircraft-centric) approach. The JROC recognized the validity of the existing JSTARS Recap requirements, but also acknowledged the imperative for change driven by the nature of future threats in a contested

environment. It requested the Air Force return to the JROC with options to provide survivable BMC2 and GMTI capabilities in both permissive and non-permissive environments and propose any requirement adjustments that might be needed to support these options. While the Air Force is still developing its response to the JROC request, it has already inserted funding into the FY19 President's Budget that will support efforts to accelerate building a robust, resilient ABMS that can operate across the full range of operating environments and mitigate the interim permissive environment risk that would result from halting the JSTARS Recap effort.

The message from the Secretary of Defense is clear: we must pursue urgent change at significant scale if we are to halt the erosion of our competitive military advantage. Ensuring we can continue to deliver GMTI and BMC2 capabilities with a more resilient approach is an important piece of this effort. The Joint Staff will continue to work with the Air Force and other stakeholders to ensure we exercise good stewardship of the nation's resources to invest in needed capabilities that will support the Joint Force across the full range of potential operating environments.

Turning from questions about BMC2 and GMTI to the broader ISR enterprise we again look to the NDS and its renewed focus on long-term strategic competition which requires that we concentrate on more than just individual platforms, also prioritizing development of resilient, survivable, federated networks and information ecosystems that inform everything from tactical actions to strategic plans.

Demand for ISR continues to outstrip supply, but continued investment in additional capacity alone will not reverse this trend. Adaptation and innovation in the development and employment of ISR capabilities will be key. We must adapt the way we manage the flow of information. In many cases, the information we need exists, but we sometimes lack the ability to “connect the dots” and then get that information to the right decision-makers at the right time. We need innovative means of collecting information that isn’t overly focused on the current fight, but also prepares us to win the fights of the future. Efforts to address these shortfalls include not only upgrading the capabilities of our collection platforms but also investing in game-changing technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning as well as pursuing governance changes designed to improve ISR requirements and capability management.

A key governance change occurred last fall when the Director of the Joint Staff approved the formation of JS J32 and the Secretary of Defense authorized the establishment of the Joint ISR Operations Center (JISROC) Chairman’s Controlled Activity (CCA) on 9 November 2017. These organizations enable the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assume leadership for synchronization of Combatant Command and Military Service ISR efforts. Activities under the purview of these organizations include global force management of ISR, joint ISR assessments, joint ISR mission approval and reporting, joint ISR enterprise management, DoD specialized scientific and technical ISR operations, allied and partner ISR integration, joint ISR modeling and simulation, ISR communication relay governance, joint ISR mission support tool management, and joint ISR force development.

Finally, House Report 115-200 tasked the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide several ISR-related briefings and/or reports. What follows is a summary of the status of these tasks:

- 1) Submit a report by 2 March 2018 on efforts to develop capabilities to collect ISR on foreign military activities and the ISR prioritization process. The report is currently in final staffing and should be delivered to the HPSCI and HASC shortly.
- 2) Submit a report by 1 March 2018 which includes a Joint Forces Sufficiency Assessment (JFSA) for ISR, based on a stress test of currently fielded ISR assets and capabilities for all approved level 3/4 OPLANS and CONPLANS. JS J32 has lead and will provide the coordinated response by the new approved suspense date of 28 August 2018.
- 3) Provide a briefing by 1 March, which describes a strategy and implementation plan to establish common standards and management procedures among DOD stakeholders to ensure joint, integrated, TCPED of MTI information collected from DOD aircraft. Through conference, DoD determined USD(I) should have lead, with Joint Staff support. The briefing is in final staffing and should be delivered to the HPSCI and HASC shortly.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and, more importantly, for your continued support for these vital programs which support the Department's enduring mission to provide combat-credible military forces needed to deter war and protect the security of our nation.