

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTIONS FORCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE BOMBER/TANKER/AIRLIFT ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

STATEMENT OF: Dr. William A. LaPlante  
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
(Acquisition)

Maj. Gen. John Thompson, USAF  
AFPEO (Tanker)

Maj. Gen. James J. Jones, USAF  
Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff  
(Operations, Plans & Requirements)

April 2, 2014

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER AND PROJECTIONS FORCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## **Introduction**

Chairman Forbes, Ranking Member McIntyre, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with an update on U.S. Air Force acquisition programs. As one of our critical core missions, our joint team is committed to fielding rapid global mobility capabilities while exercising a disciplined approach to our financial resources. On any given day, the Air Force's mobility aircraft deliver critical personnel and cargo and provide airdrop of time-sensitive supplies, food, and ammunition on a global scale. As Secretary James stated in her most recent appearance to congress, "the backbone of our bomber and tanker fleets, the B-52 and KC-135, are from the Eisenhower era, and our 4th generation fighters average 25 years of age. That is why our top three acquisition priorities remain the KC-46A aerial tanker, the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter, and the Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B). In our [Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15)] budget submission, we have fully funded these programs."

## **B-1**

The B-1B is a long-range, air refuelable multirole bomber capable of flying intercontinental missions and penetrating enemy defenses with the largest payload of guided and unguided weapons in the Air Force inventory. The B-1B is the only bomber that has been continuously deployed since 2001, and it remains so today.

The B-1B has initiated the largest modernization effort since production, the Integrated Battle Station, which combines three modification programs to provide enhanced capabilities in communications, navigation, and precision weaponry. The B-1B will complete this modernization effort in 2019. The first aircraft with this upgrade was delivered in January 2014

and four additional aircraft are planned to deliver in 2014. Other efforts to update the navigation and radar systems are well underway and will complete in 2015. Ongoing structural testing is validating the B-1B's service life thru 2040. Additional updates to the defensive avionics systems (electronic warfare systems), communications systems, and radar systems are envisioned to sustain the B-1B's combat-proven capability.

The B-1B has been identified as the initial platform for early operational capability with the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, which is transitioning from a Defense Advanced Research Projects Administration (DARPA) demonstration to the Navy-led Offensive Anti-Surface Warfare Program. Integration of this weapon, coupled with the B-1B's long range, high speed, and large payload, will posture the B-1B for an important role in 'Pivot to the Pacific' scenarios.

## **B-2**

The B-2 is the only long-range strike aircraft capable of penetrating advanced Integrated Air Defense Systems to deliver weapons against heavily defended targets. Its unique attributes of intercontinental range, precision strike, large conventional or nuclear payloads, ability to penetrate defenses, and low observable profile allow it to prosecute Nuclear Deterrence Operations, Nuclear Response, Global Strike, and Global Precision Attack missions. The Air Force will continue to modernize the B-2 to ensure it remains effective and retains its unique set of capabilities as enemy defensive systems continue to advance. Current efforts to modernize the Defensive Management System Modernization program will ensure the B-2 can continue to counter sophisticated air defense networks and operate in highly contested environments. The Air Force will at the same time continue development efforts to re-host the Stores Management Operational Flight Program software in the Flexible Strike program, which will enable the B-2 to

take advantage of advanced digital weapon interfaces such as those used by the B61-12 or the Long Range Stand Off (LRSO) weapons. The Air Force will continue development efforts to field the Common Very-Low-Frequency / Low Frequency (VLF/LF) Receiver program. It will provide a new common VLF/LF receiver for secure, survivable strategic communications capability. The Air Force will also continue fielding the Extremely High Frequency Satellite Communications and Computer Increment 1 program, a mid-life avionics upgrade to the flight management computers and digital storage and data buses. Finally, the Air Force will also continue to pursue a number of B-2 sustainment initiatives efforts to improve aircraft supportability and increase aircraft availability.

## **B-52**

The B-52 Stratofortress is our nation's oldest and most versatile frontline long-range strategic bomber, with the last airframe entering service in the United States Air Force in 1962. The Air Force continues to invest in modernization programs to keep the platform operationally relevant and updated with state-of-the-art capabilities. B-52 major modernizations efforts include the Combat Network Communications Technology (CONNECT) and 1760 Internal Weapons Bay Upgrade (IWBU) programs. CONNECT provides an integrated communication and mission management system as well as machine-to-machine interface for weapons retargeting, for the entire fleet of 76 B-52Hs. The digital infrastructure and architecture provided by CONNECT is the backbone for 1760 IWBU's and future modification efforts. The 1760 IWBU provides internal J-series weapons capability through modification of Common Strategic Rotary Launchers (CSRLs). Both increments of this program are fully funded, and when completed will significantly increase the storage B-52's capability of to deliver JDAM, Laser-JDAM, JASSM/JASSM-ER and MALD/MALD-J weapons in the B-52H. The Air Force is committed

to modernization of the B-52 using modern technology to ensure the aircraft remains relevant through 2040 and beyond as an important element of our nation's defenses.

### **Long Range Strike Bomber**

We are also continuing to invest in the development of the Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B)—one of our three top acquisition programs—to provide future Joint Force commanders with the flexibility and capacity for worldwide conventional and nuclear operations, especially in highly contested environments. We are committed to leveraging mature technologies and existing systems to deliver 80-100 affordable LRS-Bs beginning in the mid-2020s, to start replacing the aging B-1 and B-52 fleets, as they go out of service. The average production unit cost (APUC) requirement for LRS-B remains \$550M (Base Year 2010) for 100 aircraft. This APUC has played a very important role in establishing an affordable design to ensure sufficient production and a sustainable inventory of 80-100 aircraft. The LRS-B program remains on track to meet its requirements. The FY15 request includes \$913.7 million for LRS-B to continue development efforts for the program.

### **C-17**

The C-17 is the only aircraft that combines tactical capability with strategic range into austere airfield environments. It provides our Nation unmatched flexibility to conduct direct delivery, airdrop, aeromedical, and special operations airlift missions. In September 2013, we accepted our 223rd C-17. Our partnership with Boeing is adapting processes and procedures to smartly operate in a post-production environment. In order to increase budget and schedule predictability, we are working to bundle modernization and sustainment activities. Agile and efficient software and hardware updates will pace timely readiness, safety, and capability

improvements as this premier airlift platform protects our national interests and achieves our national security objectives.

The Air Force intends to utilize \$148 million in FY15 funding to continue critical modifications and upgrades to the C-17 fleet. This includes the Block 13-17 upgrade, which brings the older C-17s into a common configuration with newer C-17s. We continue to add Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) systems to the C-17 fleet to detect track and jam incoming infrared missiles. Our request of \$184 million in Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding will address obsolescence issue requirements for global civil airspace access.

## C-5

The C-5 Reliability Enhancement and Re-engineering Program (RERP) is a comprehensive effort to improve C-5 aircraft performance, reliability, maintainability, availability, and payload capability/cargo throughput. It also enables communication, navigation, surveillance/air traffic management (CNS/ATM) operations by replacing the engines and other unreliable systems/components. Overall, one C-5A, 49 C-5Bs, and 2 C-5Cs will receive the RERP modification for a fleet of 52 C-5Ms. Aircraft availability is projected for a 75% mission capable rate two years following Initial Operational Capability (IOC). The program is currently in full rate production with 16 production aircraft delivered as of January 1, 2014. The user declared IOC had been reached on February 21, 2014.

The C-5 Core Mission Computer/Weather Radar (CMC/WxRdr) is the other major effort to modernize the C-5 fleet. It will replace the current radar system, which has severe diminishing manufacturing source (DMS) issues, and upgrade the processor of the CMC to

restore a safe operating throughput margin. The selected radar replacement is the same as the one used on the KC-46. Additionally, the current CMC cannot host additional software changes or processing requirements without further encroachment on safe operating margins. The CMC operating margin is near critical and code optimization of the existing hardware is already at maximum. Further delays in processor upgrade will increase risk of system failure. A total of 52 C-5B/C/M aircraft are planned for modification.

The FY15 President's Budget (FY15 PB) requests nearly \$332M for 11 kit installs and associated program costs. \$38.8M in RDT&E funding will support CMC/WxRdr and mission systems equipment (MSE) modifications.

### **Tankers**

The backbone of rapid U.S. global operations is our tanker fleet, comprised of 396 KC-135 Stratotankers and 59 KC-10 Extenders. Based on the budget submitted, we expect to see about 60 KC-46 deliveries across the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) as part of the tanker fleet recapitalization. The KC-46A will begin to replace our aging tanker fleet in 2016, but even when the program is complete in 2028, we will have replaced less than half of the current tanker fleet and will still be flying over 200 KC-135s. Tankers are the lifeblood of our joint force's ability to respond to crisis and contingencies and are essential to keeping our Air Force viable as a global force.

### **KC-135 and KC-10**

On average, our legacy platforms are 52 years old for KC-135 and 29 years old for the KC-10. Both airframes are frequently challenged by obsolete parts and DMS. However, with the help of both organic Air Force depots and industry, we are able to maintain both platforms as

effective weapon systems for our warfighter. We are executing several key modernization initiatives to ensure the aircraft remain viable through fleet recapitalization.

The KC-135's primary modernization effort is the Block 45 program, which addresses obsolescence, reliability and maintainability issues. Block 45 is an avionics modification that includes a new digital flight director, autopilot, radio altimeter, and electronic engine instrument displays. The program completed qualification test and evaluation in February and is postured to initiate low rate initial production (LRIP) in May 2014. Completing this program will reduce operations and maintenance costs while increasing capability.

#### **KC-46**

While we continue to sustain our current capability, recapitalizing our tanker fleet remains one of our top acquisition priorities. Overall, we are on track with the KC-46 engineering, manufacturing and development (EMD) contract, awarded to Boeing a little more than three years ago. Currently the program is about 50% complete with no Engineering Change Proposals to date. Accomplishments within the last year include: completing Critical Design Review one month ahead of contractual schedule, and Boeing starting production on all four EMD aircraft. The test program is making significant progress towards first flight of EMD aircraft #1. The program office projects the first flight event to occur this summer. Stability of requirements and funding has been a cornerstone to the program's success.

The FY15 PB requests \$777M for the ongoing KC-46 EMD effort. Most of this funding is for continuation of the tanker aircraft development. Remaining development effort includes completing the build of four EMD aircraft, preparation and startup of the integrated flight test program and continued development of the Aircrew Training Systems. EMD aircraft #2, the first



KC-46 configured test aircraft, has a projected first flight in early Current Year 2015.

Remaining work during FY15 will focus on continuing the live fire test program, collecting simulator and maintenance data, and developing technical manuals.

Last year the Air Force announced its preferred alternatives for the first three bases to house the KC-46. They were McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas; Pease Air National Guard Base, New Hampshire, and Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. This spring (April – May), we anticipate the Air Force will make its final decision for the first three bases. The base site activation process is underway, with the Formal Training Unit (FTU) and first Main Operating Base Site Activation Task Forces (SATAF) recently completing their first of several scheduled meetings with respective stakeholders. Additional SATAF meetings are planned for later this year.

We recognize the Nation's fiscal challenges and appreciate the subcommittee's efforts to ensure the vital KC-46 program has been authorized the funding needed to meet contractual obligations and program requirements to date. The KC-46 program continues to execute according to the cost and schedule baselines which were established with Boeing at contract award. The program's solid performance history and realistic evaluation of remaining challenges support our confident assessment that we will deliver the new tanker, ready for war on day one.

### **C-130**

The mobility combat delivery C-130 fleet is comprised of legacy C-130H and C-130J aircraft. The C-130H and C-130Js are medium-size transport aircraft capable of completing a

variety of tactical airlift operations across a broad range of mission environments. The fleet delivers air logistic support for all theater forces including those involved in combat operations.

The C-130J aircraft, with its extended (by 15 feet) fuselage, provides extra cargo carrying capability for our combat delivery mission, compared with legacy C-130E/Hs and the C-130J (short). Special mission variants of the C-130J conduct airborne psychological operations and offensive electronic warfare (EC-130J), weather reconnaissance (WC-130J), search and rescue (HC-130J) and special operations (MC-130J and AC-130J).

We will maintain the necessary intra-theater airlift capacity by completing the recapitalization of older C-130E/H aircraft with the C-130J. The remaining legacy C-130H aircraft are being modernized to ensure fleet viability, reduce sustainment cost, and global airspace access. Current modification efforts include center wing replacement, LAIRCM, CNS/ATM, and many smaller modifications to keep the fleet combat viable into the future.

The FY14 National Defense Authorization Act gave C-130J multi-year authority. As part of the multi-year contract, the Air Force plans to procure 16 additional C-130Js in FY14 and 13 in FY15. In the FY15 PB, the Air Force requested \$36M in procurement funding for legacy C-130 fleet modifications. This includes funding for three center wing box replacement kits and a CNS/ATM program.

## **Conclusion**

The Air Force remains committed to excellence and ensuring our global reach programs continue to reflect the needs of our Nation. I am confident the air mobility fleet and bomber modernization efforts reflected in the FY15 PB will support the mission set force in the Defense Strategic Guidance and continue to provide world class rapid global mobility to our warfighters

on the ground. In the midst of the challenges ahead we will aim to keep these programs on track and deliver these systems both as a vital capability to our forces, but also as a best value to our taxpayer. These systems will provide the future capabilities necessary to operate effectively in the national security environment of tomorrow.