

**Lieutenant General Jim M. Kowalski  
Commander, AF Global Strike Command**

**Speech**

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**Lt. Gen. Kowalski:** We've had this command at full operational capability for less than two years, and as a result when I go around and talk to people I usually have to talk to some extent about the command, just to remind them that we're out there, what we do, those kinds of things. So if you'll indulge me a little bit, I know some of you are very knowledgeable about Global Strike Command, the Air Force's newest command, the first all-new major command in 27 years for the Air Force, but I will talk a little bit about that. And I'll try to keep these prepared remarks short so we have a little bit more time for questions.

Thanks again for inviting me. As you know, Global Strike Command was activated in response to some well-publicized breakdowns in nuclear discipline in the Air Force. And what we've tried to do is focus on restoring that culture of discipline, professionalism, and in our mind that was essential to rebuilding the American people's trust in the Air Force's nuclear stewardship. So I'll talk to you about where we are in our nuclear deterrent mission, how we use that force every day. I'll highlight our significant conventional capabilities, and I'll discuss where we are going longer term to ensure we continue to deter across a range of military operations.

First let me talk about the nuclear mission. As the command that was charged with leading the reinvigoration of the nuclear enterprise a few years ago, we understand that stewardship of the most powerful weapons in our arsenal is a special trust and responsibility. Nuclear operations require the highest standards of execution, compliance and critical self-assessment. Standards that demand discipline and professionalism at all levels. So we insist on uncompromising adherence to all directives, robust personnel reliability programs, strict security measures, tough inventory controls, and demanding component certifications. The command stands now at over 23,000 people across six wings responsible for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations. We have about 1100 people deployed every day out to the missile fields in support of U.S. Strategic Command, but we also have about 1100 airmen deployed every day in support of our regional combatant commanders.

We're the lead major command for ICBMs, B-2 and B-52 bombers, gravity nuclear weapons, nuclear cruise missiles, and the UH-1 helicopter. Recently we continued the operational consolidation of our nuclear enterprise by completing the transfer of the munitions squadrons from Air Force Materiel Command to Global Strike Command. This realignment provides unity of effort, efficiencies and standardized processes to further strengthen the nuke enterprise.

The Air Force has also designated our Headquarters' Director of Communications as the lead architect for the Air Force Nuclear Command and Control. That gives us greater leverage over our systems and provides a single Air Force voice to the joint and OSD communities on nuclear command and control.

What do we do with that force? There are three national objectives that we perform every day. First is strategic stability. Second is the deterrence of nuclear regional adversaries. And the third is assuring allies.

Day to day our nuclear forces provide for strategic stability with the largest nuclear powers -- Russia and China. This is a mature relationship with Russia. We've negotiated force structure parity providing the framework for continued dialogue, military-to-military engagement and transparency between our nations.

For example, during the first treaty year, the U.S. hosted 18 Russian inspection teams. In Global Strike Command we had seven visits, and every one of our wings was visited at least once.

Beyond the New START Treaty we hosted a visit from the Russian Air Force Chief of Staff. We held discussions and demonstrations with the Russians on convoy security procedures.

Our relationships with the Chinese military have been slow to develop, but the recent exchanges of high ranking defense leaders to include the ongoing visit by Defense Minister Liang this week is encouraging.

Our nuclear forces are also one element of our structure for deterring regional threats which is increasingly important in a dynamic and uncertain security environment. An environment populated with both nuclear threats and proliferators of nuclear and missile technologies.

Finally, our nuclear forces extend deterrence to our friends and allies. This assurance mission serves our nation's

nonproliferation roles by showing that our allies' security interests can be protected without them having to have their own nuclear arsenals. But extended deterrence is fragile and our will must be unimpeachable.

Against the backdrop of our national nuclear objectives, the President has made it clear we will ensure our nuclear arsenal is safe, secure and effective. As we continue our drawdown to New START force levels we must do so at a measured pace and recognize the important role of our intellectual and industrial infrastructure. That measured pace means meeting the challenges of funding and implementing the drawdown to New START limits within the required timeline. This includes the elimination of remaining B-52Gs, about 100 unused siloes left over from the previous drawdowns of the ICBM force structure. The B-52G elimination is straightforward and on track, and the environmental assessments required to develop the methods for eliminating the unused launch facilities are underway. We expect that work to begin on those siloes in the spring of next year.

We're working with Materiel Command on preparation to sore non-deployed Minuteman III missiles as we move to the limit of up to 420 deployed boosters, but we will have to watch our maintenance workload closely as we'll be simultaneously pulling boosters and execute the de-MIRV profile on the boosters that we retain.

Finally, we also have our B-52 major conversion proposal ready for the treaty compliance group, and that will be able to get us to a deployed force of up to 60.

To sustain a force that is safe, secure and effective, we must make needed investments. Our nation has enjoyed an extended procurement holiday as we've deferred vigorous modernization of our nuclear deterrent forces for almost 20 years. As we drew down our force from tens of thousands of warheads to the planned 1,550, we've lost some of the robustness and diversity that reduced our strategic and operational risk. A smaller, less diverse force is more sensitive to technical surprise, disrupted technologies, or rapid geopolitical shifts. However, by keeping and modernizing our triad of SSBNs, ICBMs and bombers, we can reduce nuclear weapons and New START limits while also sustaining strategic stability and maintaining our risk. A triad of delivery systems complicates the offensive and defensive plans and resource decisions of potential adversaries and gives our national leadership options for escalation control in a crisis.

We also can't forget the critical role played by the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, the National Nuclear Security

Agency laboratories, and our industrial partners in ensuring a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal. They are an irreplaceable infrastructure of experience and scientific excellence needed not just for the support of our operational nuclear deterrent mission, but to ensure nuclear assuredness, nuclear safety, and to enable our nonproliferation and counter-weapons of mass destruction efforts. Advancements from high performance computer modeling to air bags in cars to laser painting on commercial aircraft families were all born in our nation's national laboratories. Those laboratories are a national treasure.

We also have to recognize that if we want to avoid nuclear confrontation we must first have credible conventional forces that can deter and assure in the earliest stages of a crisis. We've made huge strides in developing the conventional capabilities of our bomber forces with the addition of precision and smart munitions and targeting pods. We've woven the bomber force into the fabric of joint force packages.

Since Operation allied Force bombers with precision munitions have executed strikes in every major military operation. Almost 11 years ago B-2s from the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing kick-started Operation Enduring Freedom and just a year ago B-1s and B-2s responded when our nation called in Operation Odyssey Dawn against the Gadhafi regime.

In Afghanistan we continue to rely on the payload and persistence bombers can provide when they're deploying forward. Just a few weeks ago the B-1s reached a milestone -- their 10,000<sup>th</sup> combat sortie. We fly bombers across a range of military operations from information operations to close air support to offensive counter-air to strategic attack. As we pivot to the Pacific and refocus on power projection, the role of our bombers will remain central to bringing the threat of mass precision and persistence to support the regional combatant commanders.

But in both conventional and nuclear missions we're challenged with an aging force and the associated problems of corrosion, declining industrial base, vanishing vendors, overseas components, and rising depot costs. Taken together, these serve to complicate the long-term challenge of balancing sustainment with modernization during a period of budget austerity.

Our Minuteman III came on-line in 1970 with an expected life span of ten years, but still maintains an alert rate of over 99 percent. Minuteman III is now planned to be in service until 2030, a full 50 years past its design life. So far we've had

good success with a number of sustainment programs to include replacing the boosters, upgrading environmental controls, modernizing security and support equipment, and securing new special purpose vehicles. In our FY13 proposal we fully funded the fuse replacement initiatives in partnership with the Navy, fully funded a new transporter erector, and started the next solid rocket motor.

To counter the deferral of the replacement helicopter for the 40 year old UH1-N we transferred three helicopters from the Marine Corps and are reviewing affordable force structure mission and safety upgrades to the current UH-1 fleet. However, these are stop-gap measures and they don't negate the need for a replacement helicopter. The UH-1 remains deficient in payload, speed and range. Unable to meet national nuclear security, continuity of government and continuity of operation mission requirements. It's not a matter of if we get a replacement helicopter, it's really an issue of when we can afford to replace the UH-1.

Our current force of B-52s is at the half century mark and will remain viable through 2040. We continue to keep the aircraft relevant with upgrades to include better software for the advanced targeting pods, a weapons-grade modernization program to allow full carriage of smart weapons. That upgrade increases its smart weapon payload by 66 percent. Affordability and performance issue have caused us to restructure the Combat Network Communications Technology upgrade, CONECT, and we're in a review now to determine the best way forward to address the need for a digital backbone for the B-52. Finally, we've also had to defer two other B-52 upgrade programs. The strategic radar and the advanced satellite communications upgrade.

For our B-2s, they remain funded for the defensive systems upgrades and a weapons computer upgrade. We terminated the second part of a B-52 advanced satellite communication program in favor of a more affordable VLF/LF solution to ensure survivable nuclear communications.

On the weapons side, the B-61 tail kit needed to integrate with the life extension of the warhead is fully funded, as is the life extension of the air launched cruise missile through 2020 and it is partially funded through 2030.

These upgraded life extension efforts along won't ensure our nation retains a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent force. At the heart of our modernization efforts is a long range strike family of systems. A new penetrating bomber, a new standoff nuclear cruise missile, a conventional prompt global

strike capability and the replacement for the Minuteman III. As Secretary Russ once warned, "We must not expose them to intolerable temptation through our own weakness. We must maintain a strong, capable, national force."

Preserving the peace requires we give our national leaders a broad range of options to manage crisis. Should competition become confrontation, our nation's resolve and military strength will prove decisive to deter and assure and preclude that confrontation from becoming a conflict.

Thanks for your attention, your time, and I'll open it up to questions.