DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

THE JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

STATEMENT OF: **GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III**
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

GENERAL MARK A. WELSH III

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III is Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training and equipping of 690,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the general and other service chiefs function as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and the President.

General Welsh was born in San Antonio, Texas. He entered the Air Force in June 1976 as a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has been assigned to numerous operational, command and staff positions. Prior to his current position, he was Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

EDUCATION

1976 Bachelor of Science degree, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
1984 Squadron Officer School, by correspondence
1986 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence
1987 Master of Science degree in computer resource management, Webster University
1988 Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
1990 Air War College, by correspondence
1993 National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
1995 Fellow, Seminar XXI, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
1998 Fellow, National Security Studies Program, Syracuse University and John Hopkins University, Syracuse, N.Y.
1999 Fellow, Ukrainian Security Studies, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
2002 The General Manager Program, Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

2009 Fellow, Pinnacle Course, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
2009 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. August 1976 - July 1977, Student, undergraduate pilot training, Williams Air Force Base, Ariz.
2. July 1977- January 1981, T-37 Instructor Pilot and class commander, Williams AFB, Ariz.
3. January 1981 - May 1981, Student, fighter lead-in training, Holloman AFB, N.M.
4. May 1981 - August 1981, Student, A-10 training, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.
5. August 1981 - May 1984, Instructor pilot, Flight Commander and wing standardization and evaluation Flight Examiner, 78th Tactical Fighter Squadron and 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, Royal Air Force Woodbridge, England
6. May 1984 - June 1987, Commander, Cadet Squadron 5, later, executive officer to the Commandant of Cadets, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
7. June 1987 - June 1988, Student, Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.
8. June 1988 - October 1988, Student, F-16 conversion training, Luke AFB, Ariz.
9. October 1988 - July 1992, Operations Officer, 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron, later, Commander, 4th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Hill AFB, Utah
10. July 1992 - June 1993, Student, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
11. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
12. June 1995 - April 1997, Commander, 347th Operations Group, Moody AFB, Ga.
13. April 1997 - June 1998, Commander, 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea
14. June 1998 - June 1999, Commander, College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
15. June 1999 - September 2001, Commandant of Cadets and Commander, 34th Training Wing, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
16. September 2001 - April 2003, Director of Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
17. April 2003 - June 2005, Director of Global Power Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
18. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.
19. July 2007 - August 2008, Vice Commander, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas
20. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for Military Support/Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C.
21. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base, Germany; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
22. August 2012 - present, Chief of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

1. June 1993 - June 1995, Chief, Defense and Space Operations Division, Operations Directorate (J3), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., as a lieutenant colonel and a colonel
2. June 2005 - June 2007, Deputy Commander, Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, U.S. Strategic Command, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C., as a major general
3. August 2008 - December 2010, Associate Director for Military Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency,

Washington, D.C., as a major general and a lieutenant general
4. December 2010 - July 2012, Commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe; Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein Air Base; and Director, Joint Air Power Competency Center, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as a general

FLIGHT INFORMATION
Rating: Command pilot
Flight hours: More than 3,300
Aircraft flown: F-16, A-10, T-37 and TG-7A

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS
Defense Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster
Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with oak leaf cluster
Aerial Achievement Medal
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air Force Commendation Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION
Second Lieutenant June 2, 1976
First Lieutenant June 2, 1978
Captain June 2, 1980
Major May 1, 1985
Lieutenant Colonel June 1, 1989
Colonel Feb. 1, 1994
Brigadier General Aug. 1, 2000
Major General Aug. 1, 2003
Lieutenant General Dec. 9, 2008
General Dec. 13, 2010

(Current as of August 2012)

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Cochran, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) and the future of tactical aircraft. Thank you also for your support of our Airmen who are currently engaged around the world executing our five core missions of air and space superiority, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, rapid global mobility, global strike, and command and control to provide *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for our Nation.

In January 2012, the Secretary of Defense issued new defense strategic guidance (DSG)—*Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*—which serves as a foundational document both to articulate national security interests, and to guide America's military posture and procurement. To support this guidance, the F-35A, along with the KC-46 tanker and the long range strike bomber, remain the Air Force's top three acquisition programs. The F-35A will form the backbone of our tactical aircraft fleet for many years, and will replace our aging fighters with a dominant, multi-role, fifth-generation aircraft, capable of projecting power, deterring potential adversaries, and winning future wars alongside similarly-equipped allies and partners.

AIR SUPERIORITY AND GLOBAL STRIKE

The F-35A directly impacts two of our five core missions—air superiority and global strike. While complementing the F-22's world-class air superiority capabilities, the F-35A is designed to penetrate integrated air defense systems (IADS) and deliver a wide range of precision air-to-ground and air-to-air munitions against air defense targets. These suppression and destruction of enemy air defense (SEAD/DEAD) missions are a prerequisite to gaining air superiority. Air superiority provides freedom of action for the entire joint force. In fact, April 15, 1953, was the last time an American service member on the ground was killed by an enemy aircraft. The air superiority that America has enjoyed for over 60 years is not an accident, and gaining and maintaining it is not easy. It requires a credible, capable fleet of aircraft employing cutting edge technology to counter emergent threats, as well as a trained, proficient, and ready force of Airmen to fly them. As an Air Force, we are proud of the decades of consistent delivery of air superiority that we have been able to provide the Nation, and we believe it is our duty and obligation to continue and preserve that core mission. Without air superiority, the joint team

would have to radically change how it goes to war, with U.S. and allied operational success subject to much greater risk.

In terms of global strike, the F-35A will also pay dividends as we re-focus our attention to the possibility of military operations in contested environments. Our fighters and bombers have enjoyed relative freedom from attack in Iraq and Afghanistan, but as increasingly sophisticated and capable global anti-access/area-denial threats continue to proliferate, the ability of our fourth-generation fighters to penetrate contested airspace will wane. Much like the initial days of the first Gulf War, when only the F-117 possessed the capability to strike downtown Baghdad, the F-35A's survivability and lethality in highly contested environments will help deter and defeat potential adversaries anywhere on the planet, holding any target at risk, today and tomorrow.

THREATS

Over the last 22 years, our military has fought four major regional conflicts—Kuwait, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, with the smaller-scale enforcement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 over Libya concluding just 18 months ago. However, our security challenges persist across the globe from transnational terrorism in Africa, to regional instability in the Middle East, to a nuclear-armed North Korea. Our technological advantage is threatened by the worldwide proliferation of advanced air defense systems such as the Russian-built S-300 which has garnered recent headlines in Syria. Moreover, countries are developing fighters on par or better than our legacy, fourth-generation fleet. For example, China and Russia are currently testing fifth-generation fighters, with China recently flying two new advanced stealth fighters—the J-20 and J-31. These world-wide technological advancements are occurring at time when our fighter fleet numbers about 2,000 aircraft and averages 23 years old, the smallest and oldest in our history.

CAPABILITIES

While the Air Force's current fleet of fighters has excelled in recent conflicts, the JSF is a necessity for future, high-end engagement, providing increased survivability and lethality. Fifth-generation survivability attributes include improved all-aspect stealth, advanced electronic warfare systems, and fused mission systems that provide unmatched battlespace awareness. It

also includes the necessary tactical air characteristics of maneuverability and speed. In terms of lethality, the F-35A offers unprecedented data fusion and situational awareness with powerful radars, sensors, and other high performance capabilities that allow the successful prosecution of advanced ground and air threats in any environment, to include the dense high-threat environments characterized by double digit surface-to-air-missiles (SAMs) and multi-layered IADS. Our current fighters have been modernized to incorporate some of the latest component technologies, but they are at the limits of both modernization and service life. We cannot modernize the fourth-generation fleet to the level of survivability and lethality necessary to operate and prevail in highly contested environments. Recapitalization of the tactical fighter fleet through the JSF program best positions America's military to meet the security challenges of today and tomorrow, and to fulfill America's defense posture as expressed by the Defense Strategic Guidance.

Future military operations will require partnership with international partners and allies. The JSF's interoperability offers another unique capability that will enable America's military and Air Force to fight alongside our coalition partners seamlessly in the future. In addition to shared equipment and costs,[1] the JSF's interoperability will lead to common tactics, techniques, and procedures, mutual understanding of employment, and unprecedented degrees of shared situational awareness. Such integration will greatly enhance our ability to operate, survive, and succeed in future joint and coalition environments. By employing the same world-class equipment with similar procedures and tactics, we will be able to fully realize the synergistic effects of fifth-generation joint and coalition warfare.

CURRENT STATUS

The fiscal year 2014 budget request includes $4.5 billion for continued development and procurement of 19 F-35A conventional take-off and landing (CTOL) aircraft. Aggressive risk management and refined system engineering analysis contributed to an approximate 30 percent reduction in concurrency cost estimates since 2011, and the program has made significant strides overcoming technical challenges and software development delays.

1 International partners have provided over $4.5 billion for JSF development

The Air Force has received 22 production aircraft, and these early production deliveries have allowed us to begin the necessary ramp-up for future operational tests, and to build our initial cadre of pilot and maintenance instructors. To date, the program has completed over 1,400 CTOL test flights, comprising 46 percent of planned test points, and testing the JSF to its full envelope—700 knots, over 50,000 feet, over 50 degrees angle of attack, and multiple successful weapon separation tests to include the first AIM-120 live launch. We also completed the first life-durability test on the F-35A, a key milestone that reduces concurrency cost risk to future low-rate initial production (LRIP) lots.

During calendar year 2012, the JSF program conducted a successful operational utility evaluation and started pilot training at Eglin Air Force Base. We currently have 23 trained USAF pilots and 437 trained maintainers at Eglin. We expect the first aircraft delivery to Luke AFB—the first F-35A pilot training center—in February 2014, and to our first partner there, Australia, in the summer of 2014. We will also stand up the CTOL depot at Hill AFB this summer, and deliver their first aircraft in October of 2013.

Building on the progress made so far and the steps we take today are crucial in our efforts to declare F-35A initial operational capability (IOC). After last year's program re-baseline, the joint Services were tasked to provide Congress our updated IOC criteria and timeline estimates. Currently, the Air Force plans to declare IOC in December 2016 with a combat-ready squadron of 12 F-35As. The Air Force will declare F-35A IOC when Airmen are trained and equipped to conduct basic close air support, interdiction, and limited SEAD/DEAD operations in a contested environment. The follow-on 3F software package will add even more capability into the Air Force air superiority core mission by enabling multi-ship suppression and destruction of enemy air defenses, as well as enhanced air-to-air and air-to-ground modes. The 3F software suite is expected in 2017 and should be included in LRIP lot nine production aircraft.

SEQUESTRATION

We recognize that in the current fiscal environment, we must adapt to expected resource constraints. The JSF program has seen significant improvement in recent years, but the blunt effects of sequestration threaten to disrupt that progress. Sequestration significantly impacts every one of our investment programs, including the F-35A. Although unit costs for the F-35A

have been trending down due to relative program stability, sequestration-induced disruptions to the program could, over time, potentially cost more taxpayer dollars to rectify program inefficiencies, raise unit costs, and delay delivery of validated capability. In fiscal year 2013, we planned to procure 19 F-35A aircraft. As a result of sequestration, we may have to reduce the procurement quantity by at least three and potentially as many as five aircraft.

CONCLUSION

The JSF is critical to our national security. This platform will form the backbone of our tactical aircraft fleet for many years to come, and will reinvigorate our aging fleet with a dominant, multirole, fifth-generation fighter. The JSF will feature prominently in future joint and coalition operations—flying with both U.S. and allied markings—projecting power, deterring potential adversaries, and winning future wars.

Although sequestration jeopardizes the stability of the program as we struggle to simultaneously regain readiness and recapitalize the Air Force's fighter and tanker fleets, we are committed to build upon the many significant milestones the JSF program has achieved in recent years. We have made great strides to reduce expenses across the life of the program, but we need Congress to pass a defense appropriations measure for fiscal year 2014 so that we can plan for the future. The JSF represents an investment in the air superiority of our Nation. It will assure that when America sends her sons and daughters to fight, they will fight with the protection of American airpower overhead…just as their brothers, sisters, parents, and grandparents have done in every conflict since April 15, 1953.