**Memorandum**

**Senate Committee on Armed Services:**

***To receive testimony on the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the******Defense Authorization Request for FY2023 and the Future Years Defense Program***

May 3, 2022

**Members Participating**

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI)

Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK)

Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS)

Senator Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY)

Senator Angus King (I-ME)

Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD)

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA)

Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC)

Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ)

Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA)

Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE)

Senator Jacky Rosen (D -NV)

Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)

Senator Rick Scott (R-FL)

Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR)

Senator Josh Hawley (R-MO)

**Witnesses**

Honorable Frank Kendall III, *Secretary of the Air Force*

General Charles Brown, *Chief of Staff of the Air Force*

General John Raymond, *Chief of Space Operations*

**Summary**

The Senate Armed Services Committee met to discuss Air Force and Space Force budget initiatives for FY23. Much of the focus was placed on the AF, but General Raymond was present to respond to the bulk of space-related questions. In the raised budget request meeting, Senators in much of the open session asked about recruitment, a potential Space National Guard, and the focus on R&D compared to near-peer adversary China.

**Opening Statements**

Secretary Kendall: Looking for increased funding to support R&D and the main goal is deterrence. Has seven points of emphasis: The Space Force needs to transform its architecture, AF and SF must be integrated into a joint force (Advanced Battle Management System—ABMS), there must be able to hold multiple targets at risk at the same time, they need an affordable next-generation family of systems, have resilient forward-basing, must ensure long-term viability of global strike capability, and AF must be prepared at any point to engage in warfare activities.

General Brown: This year’s budget supports the backstop that is nuclear deterrence.

General Raymond: Commercial imagery has been critical in information sharing. Asking for $24.5 billion to fund SF. Over $16 billion will fund R&D initiatives.

**Questions**

Senator Reed: Must renew small business programs, how critical is it to renew these programs?

* Secretary Kendall: Extremely important as it helps put small businesses in a position where the AF can acquire their product(s). Increases competition.

Senator Gillibrand: The Space Force has decided to forego its annual fitness test. What impact do traditional fitness requirements have on Space Forces’ ability to recruit and retain technical talent? Who is the Space Force trying to recruit? What is the split between uniformed and civilian?

* General Raymond: Have more people wanting to join than they can take. The health and fitness program talks about all-year round health instead of one exam.
* General Raymond: Software coders, data scientists, people from industry too
* General Raymond: 50-50 split between uniformed and civilian

Senator Fischer: How do you expect increased cost of building materials and supply chain issues to impact projects? Discuss the changes to the OPIR project and new missile tracking project works along.

* Secretary Kendall: Concerned about fuel prices and inflation. Need to make adjustments moving forward.
* General Raymond: Critical to make the transformation—especially with hypersonic missiles. Have to develop a bridging strategy for space architecture. GEOINT satellite will be up by 2025.

Senator Kaine: Do you think that the budget adequately addresses the sustainment of the remaining U.S. aircraft production lines? How is DoD protecting U.S. assets in space?

* Secretary Kendall: Yes. The production of the F-35 has slowed and they are trying to wrap up production of the F-15 more rapidly.
* Secretary Kendall: VP’s announcement was in line with mentality.
* General Raymond: Providing STM for the world.

Senator Ernst: How will you build and encourage a fast-follower type model for private industry and assume the risk of potentially failing faster? Are people receiving the training necessary to accomplish these fast and agile goals? How can Space Force’s acquisition mindset translate and be applied to the AF?

* General Raymond: Have to be bold and innovative. Adopting more of an industry business model approach because of the need for smaller, more, and less-exquisite satellites. Acquiring talent from industry. Sent AF cadets, before they joined SF, to work at commercial companies.
* General Raymond: Yes, on the road for that.
* Secretary Kendall: The Chinese are faster at decision making and have studied the U.S.

Senator Cramer: Cavalier radar in North Dakota is in dire need of repairs or upgrade, but nothing in the budget indicates that such work will take place.

* General Raymond: Priority for this year’s budget was being able to track hypersonics. The radar is going under an analog to digital upgrade.

Senator Cotton:

Most questions asked were to be asked in closed session regarding hypersonics, space capabilities, and more.

Senator Wicker: Why isn’t hypersonic testing and F-35 procurement in the budget? Should Congress budget approval be increased to adjust for inflation?

* Secretary Kendall: The budget includes what the AF needs to do its job. Would like to work together.

Senator King: How many AF Academy graduates want to join the Space Force?

* General Raymond: SF is commissioning 101 this year.

Senator Blackburn: Looking to pivot to R&D instead of ARRW (hypersonic missile). What are the implications of this decision? How to become less risk-averse?

* Secretary Kendall: ARRW has had many test failures but will reassess.
* Secretary Kendall: Best time to accept failures is in early testing.

Senator Blackburn: Establishing a Space National Guard. Where is that in the process?

* General Raymond: The best ways are to either have a separate Space National Guard or take the capabilities from the National Guard and move them into this one role.

Senator Kelly: How will the USSF develop its capabilities in space albeit the commitment to no ASAT testing?

* General Raymond: Do not need to test capabilities in a destructive way. Will discuss more in a closed session.

Senator Scott: Would setting up a Space National Guard be more cost-effective?

* General Raymond: NDAA directed them to do a study.

Senator Manchin: How are you approaching a potentially Space National Guard?

* General Raymond: They operate with 839 Guardsman and are limited in certain states. There is a new group in Guam.