Army's Top Logistician Remains 'Cautiously Optimistic' on Afghanistan Withdrawal

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (OCT. 4, 2013)
Army Sgt. 1st Class Raymond J. Piper

WASHINGTON—The Army's top logistician told members of the House Armed Services Committee Oct. 2 he remains "cautiously optimistic" that the Army will complete its withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Right now we are on the glide slope we had planned, but that can change overnight. One incident at a border could cause us challenges," said Lt. Gen. Raymond. V. Mason, deputy chief of staff, Army G4.

The Army continues to bring soldiers and equipment home while finishing operations and training Afghan forces with the goal of all non-enduring equipment returning by October 2014.

"The closure of bases, then the retrograde that follows, is based on what [the] commander on the ground is doing as he works through the BSA [bilateral security agreement]," Mason said.

The Army plans on bringing back $17 billion worth of equipment currently in Afghanistan, but assumes generally stable conditions, Mason said. Critical to the success of meeting the 2014 deadline is the Pakistan ground lines of communication, which is referred to as the PAKGLOC by military commanders, and to a lesser extent the northern distribution network, or NDN. Both of these land routes are less expensive then multi-modal and direct air transportation.

"Unfortunately the PAKGLOC and the NDN are not always viable and open," Mason said. "Additionally other variables, including increased enemy activity or potential delays in Afghan elections, would most certainly effect our retrograde and drawdown plans."

Currently, 50 percent of the Army's equipment leaves Afghanistan through the PAKGLOC, and that is where Mason would like the majority of equipment to flow through.

The multi-modal route requires equipment to be flown from Afghanistan to a port and loaded onto a ship. Shipping equipment by sea cuts costs significantly compared to flying it home, Mason said.

In some cases, equipment is flown to the United States from Afghanistan, but is limited to critical items, such as communication equipment and weapons.

The fluctuating price of fuel is a concern for Mason and an exact cost for retrograde is hard to nail down. Mason said the Army has budgeted $2 to $3 billion to get equipment home, but fuel is a huge variable.

"If fuel costs continue to go up, we are going to push into the $3 billion range," Mason said. "If the PAKGLOC was to close, we could in fact go above the $3 billion range, because we would have to fly more out."

Acquisition Chiefs Describe Effects of Budget Uncertainty

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 24, 2013)
Claudette Roulo

WASHINGTON—With assessments ranging from "sobering" to "painful," acquisition chiefs from each of the military services yesterday described the devastation being wreaked upon their branches by sequestration and the continuing resolution.

Citing halted development programs, hiring freezes, and narrowing technological advantages, the acquisition chiefs warned members of the House Armed Services Committee that the ongoing budget uncertainty is putting the nation at risk.

"Maintaining current readiness and forward presence to the extent possible under sequestration comes at expense to our investment in future readiness. In fiscal year 2014 alone, absent congressional action or mitigating circumstances, the continuing resolution and sequestration would cause cancelled procurements of up to three major warships and 25 aircraft," said Sean J. Stackley, the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

Heidi Shyu, the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, pointed to stability's central role in guaranteeing successful acquisitions programs.

"Our capacity to maintain expertise in science and technology, engineering, contracting, cost estimation [and] logistics are all at risk because one of the most attractive benefits to the government employee—the stability—has been undermined," she said.

"Every major development suffers delay, or reduction, or cancellation in this budget environment where uncertainty seemingly guides every decision," Stackley said.

The acquisition chiefs said sequestration will end up costing the Defense Department more than it saves. Cuts to development programs will drive up unit costs and are already

delaying testing, said William A. LaPlante, the Air Force's principal deputy assistant secretary for acquisition.

More than 192 Army programs could be affected if sequestration continues to occur, Shyu said, noting that some of the most significant repercussions would be felt in the AH-64E Apache and CH-47 Chinook helicopter programs. The Army will be in danger of losing the production contracts entirely, she said, exposing the government to $77 million in termination liabilities and a $1.4-billion increase in costs.

Under the continuing resolution, the Services are not permitted to change how funds are appropriated from one year to the next, leaving some accounts with excess cash while others are underfunded. In fiscal year 2013, Congress authorized the transfer of some funds between accounts, but that flexibility has not been renewed for fiscal year 2014.

The inflexible funding means the Air Force is likely to have to cut the number of aircraft it buys this year, LaPlante said, singling out the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter program as an example.

"We'll lose somewhere between four and five airplanes in '14. And I could go through some other programs," he added.

Besides the impacts on procurement, sequestration's effects on the civilian workforce will continue to be felt nationwide, Stackley said.

"As many as 100,000 professional jobs are at risk as a result to the potential cuts to Navy and Marine Corps operations and programs," he noted.

And while DoD leaders have vowed to make every effort to protect civilians from further furloughs, the ongoing disruptions in training and productivity are translating to reduced readiness and decreased morale across the military and civilian workforce, the acquisition chiefs said.

Ultimately, the ability to be good stewards of public funds depends upon a stable, predictable, and adequate funding environment, Shyu said. Absent such an environment, the lives of servicemembers, and the safety and security of the nation are placed at risk, she added.

Defense Officials Detail Nuke Upgrade Program

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (OCT. 30, 2013)
Claudette Roulo

WASHINGTON—Defense Department officials testified on Capitol Hill yesterday about the program to modernize one of the oldest weapons in the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Madelyn R. Creedon, the assistant secretary of defense for global strategic affairs, and Air Force Gen. C. Robert Kehler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, spoke at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee's strategic forces subcommittee.

The B61-12 nuclear gravity bomb has the oldest warhead design in the U.S. nuclear stockpile, Creedon said, noting that some of the warhead's components date back to the 1960s.

"Only through extraordinary measures has this aging family of weapons remained safe, secure, and effective far beyond its originally planned operational life," Kehler told the House panel. No full-scope nuclear modernization programs have taken place since production of new warheads was suspended in the 1990s, Creedon added.

The B61-12 modernization program is intended to address several components that are affected by age-related issues, Creedon said, and will give the B61-12 an extended life span while making sustainment more cost-effective.

The nation's nuclear forces perform three key functions, Kehler told the subcommittee. They deter potential adversaries, assure allies and partners of the United States' extended deterrence commitments to them, and "in the unlikely event deterrence fails, [they employ] nuclear weapons when directed by the president to achieve U.S. and allied objectives," he said.

Effectively performing those missions, the general said, requires modernized nuclear delivery systems and programs that can repair and replace aging components.

A multi-decade effort to revitalize the nuclear deterrent force and its supporting infrastructure is just beginning, Kehler told the panel. The B61-12 life extension program is just one aspect of that effort, he said, which includes upgrades to the land-based ballistic missile capability, replacement of Ohio-class submarines, development of a new long-range penetrating bomber, and upgrades to the existing B-52H Stratofortress and B-2A Spirit bomber force.

In addition, the nuclear enterprise's baseline modernization program, called the "3-plus-2 strategy," will consolidate 12 unique warhead types into three interoperable variants deliverable from land-based platforms and submarines, with two additional variants for aerial platforms, Creedon said. This would set the stage for a reduction in the total number of stockpiled nuclear weapons, she noted.

A key component of the life extension program is the replacement of an expensive parachute system with a newly designed tail assembly, which Creedon noted will increase the B61-12's accuracy. And with increased accuracy comes the ability to decrease the weapon's yield without reducing its capabilities, the assistant secretary added.

The new tail kit plays a critical role in integrating the B61-12 with the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter, Creedon said. Without it, the F-35 will not be able to use the weapon, she explained, preventing the aircraft from fulfilling its intended role as the only dual-capable fighter in the U.S. inventory.

The life extension program is estimated to cost about $8.1 billion through 2024, Creedon said, and the Defense Department continues to examine the program for potential savings. Despite these efforts, she said, the program remains threatened by sequestration.

Cuts to other programs have stressed the baseline modernization program, the assistant secretary said, and are contributing to unplanned cost increases in the B61-12 life extension program by lengthening development and production periods.

"The commitment we make to refurbish this nuclear weapon system will serve as a concrete signal to the world of our commitment to the nation's security and our position as a guarantor of nuclear deterrence and assurance to our allies and partners," Creedon told the House panel.

The B61-12 is an important component of this commitment, she added, and to the department's commitment to the revitalization of the nation's nuclear deterrent.

Hagel: Six Priorities Shape Future Defense Institutions

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 5, 2013)
Cheryl Pellerin

WASHINGTON—In the months since the 2012 defense strategic guidance first reflected a new budget reality, Pentagon officials and military leaders have been working on the department's longer term budget and strategy, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said here this morning.

In the keynote address before the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Global Security Forum, Hagel said a needed realignment of missions and resources is being undertaken across the department that will require significant change across every aspect of the enterprise.

"I have identified six areas of focus for our budget and strategic planning efforts going forward," the secretary said. "Working closely with the Service secretaries, Service chiefs, combatant commanders, and DoD leaders," he added, "these six priorities will help determine the shape of our defense institutions for years to come."

The priorities include institutional reform, force planning, preparing for a prolonged military readiness challenge, protecting investments in emerging capabilities, balancing capacity and capability across the Services, and balancing personnel responsibilities with a sustainable compensation policy.

During his first weeks in office, Hagel said, he directed a Strategic Choices and Management Review that over several months identified options for reshaping the force and institutions in the face of difficult budget scenarios.

"That review pointed to the stark choices and tradeoffs in military capabilities that will be required if sequester-level cuts persist, but it also identified opportunities to make changes and reforms," Hagel said.

"Above all," he added, "it underscored the reality that DoD still possesses resources and options. We will need to more efficiently match our resources to our most important national security requirements. We can do things better, we must do things better, and we will."

Addressing the six priorities that will shape future defense efforts, the secretary began with a continued a focus on institutional reform.

Coming out of more than a decade of war and budget growth, he said, there is a clear opportunity and need to reshape the defense enterprise, including paring back the world's largest back office. This summer, Hagel announced a 20 percent reduction in headquarters budgets across the department, beginning with the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"Our goal is not only to direct more of our resources to real military capabilities and readiness," Hagel said, "but to make organizations flatter and more responsive to the needs of our men and women in uniform."

The second priority is to re-evaluate the military force-planning construct—the assumptions and scenarios for which U.S. military forces organize, train, and equip themselves.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel speaks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies during its fourth annual Global Security Forum in Washington, D.C., Nov. 5, 2013. Hagel discussed how the department would adapt to a changing strategic and fiscal landscape.

DoD photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo

"I've asked our military leaders to take a very close look at these assumptions [and] question these past assumptions, which will also be re-evaluated across the Services as part of the [Quadrennial Defense Review]," the secretary explained.

"The goal," he added, "is to ensure they better reflect our goals and the shifting strategic environment, the evolving capacity of our allies and partners, real-world threats, and the new military capabilities that reside in our force and in the hands of our potential adversaries."

Hagel said the third priority will be to prepare for a prolonged military readiness challenge. In managing readiness under sequestration, he added, the Services have protected the training and equipping of deploying forces to ensure that no one goes unprepared into harm's way.

This is the department's highest responsibility to its forces, the secretary said, and yet already, "we have seen the readiness of nondeploying units suffer as training has been curtailed, flying hours reduced, ships not steaming, and exercises canceled."

The Strategic Choices and Management Review showed that sequester-level cuts could lead to a readiness crisis, and unless something changes, Hagel said, "we have to think urgently and creatively about how to avoid that outcome, because we are consuming our future readiness now."
The fourth priority will be protecting investments in emerging military capabilities—especially space, cyber, special operations forces, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the secretary said.

"As our potential adversaries invest in more sophisticated capabilities and seek to frustrate our military's traditional advantages, including our freedom of action and access ... around the world," he said, "it will be important to maintain our decisive technological edge."

The fifth priority is balance across the Services in the mix between capacity and capability, between active and reserve forces, between forward-stationed and home-based forces, and between conventional and unconventional warfighting capabilities, Hagel said.

"In some cases we will make a shift, for example, by prioritizing a smaller, modern, and capable military over a larger force with older equipment. We will also favor a globally active and engaged force over a garrison force," he explained. The Services will look to better leverage the reserve components, with the understanding that part-time units in ground forces can't expect to perform at the same levels as full-time units, at least in the early stages of a conflict. In other cases,

the Services will seek to preserve balance, for example, by controlling areas of runaway cost growth, the secretary said. The sixth priority is personnel and compensation policy, which Hagel said may be the most difficult issue.

"Without serious attempts to achieve significant savings in this area, which consumes roughly now half the DoD budget and increases every year, we risk becoming an unbalanced force—one that is well-compensated, but poorly trained and equipped, with limited readiness and capability," he said.

Going forward, the department must make hard choices in this area to ensure that the defense enterprise is sustainable for the 21st century, the secretary said.

Hagel said Congress must permit meaningful reforms as it reduces the defense budget, and the department needs Congress as a willing partner in making tough choices to bend the cost curve on personnel, while meeting its responsibilities to its people.

"Even as we pursue change across the Department of Defense," the secretary said, "the greatest responsibility of leadership will always remain the people we represent, our men and women in uniform, their families, and our dedicated civilian workforce."

Acquisition Chief Seeks System Improvements, Not Reform

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 7, 2013)
Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon's acquisition chief today discussed the state of the defense acquisition system and methods the Defense Department, working with industry, can use to improve it.

"I put out a document a few months ago ... the defense acquisition system first annual report," Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics told an audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. It came out, he said, without much fanfare, but has gained a lot of reaction and responses from many communities.

"The intent was to put some data on the table and start looking at how we're actually doing by a number of different metrics," Kendall explained. "And to get a feel for who's doing better than some other people, and why."

Kendall said rather than discussing acquisition reform, a better way to describe it would be acquisition improvement.

"[This] forces you to confine your thinking to specific things you can do that will make a difference," he said. "I don't think, frankly, that you can wave away the entire system and start over, and expect to have something that looks very, very different from what you have today."

The types of acquisition decisions the Defense Department has to make, he said, involving the approval of weapon systems and contracts, won't change.

"The other thing that's true about acquisition is that it's incredibly complex.

"It encompasses so many different things that have to be done well to get good outcomes," he continued, "that it's very, very difficult to pull out and correlate specific factors."

Kendall noted that acquisition reform isn't a new problem by any means, and he used a specific program to illustrate his point.

"The program had an innovative, but unconventional design and was criticized as extravagant," he said. "It included a multi-mission requirement that spanned both irregular warfare and high-intensity warfare, putting conflicting demands on the design."

That program also "included the use of exotic materials which delayed construction and raised costs," Kendall added. The political establishment, he said, was divided over the need and cost, and contracts were spread around a number of states for political purposes.

In addition, Kendall noted the cost growth was excessive, which caused schedule slips and program instability.

"The Congress was alarmed at the cost and scheduled delays, and conducted inquiries," he said. "And [they] railed at the waste that was going on in the program."

While some may have speculated Kendall was referring to the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program, he said he was referring to the process that built the first six frigates for the U.S. Navy in 1794.

"Sound familiar?" he asked. "So there's been a lot of acquisition reform — not just in our lifetime. People [have] talked about it for a very, very long time."

Kendall said it's his "firm belief" there are very simple factors that drive outcomes in acquisition—professionalism on the

government and industry sides, as well as leadership and hard work.

Finally he said, is "a measure of courage" to do the hard thing when it's more expedient to go ahead and spend money.

Kendall said DoD is doing "hundreds of things to try and improve" its acquisition processes.

"You have to attack on a lot of fronts, and get a lot of things right. It's very detailed, difficult work."

Kendall also noted the next update for DoDI 5000.02, the source document that provides guidance on structuring acquisition programs, will be available soon and will emphasize the tailoring of acquisition programs more than previous versions.

"We show people multiple models of how you can structure an acquisition program depending upon what the product is," he said, noting an update was necessary because of laws which needed to be implemented.

Kendall said his team is also working with industry to help reduce overhead, which he said are "things that are adding cost, but not adding value."

DoD's acquisition professionals "want to get to the specifics," Kendall said. "It's not about reform, it's about improvement and specific things we can do to move us forward and in the right direction."

Kendall: Sequestration Will Make Hollow Force Inevitable

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV, 7, 2013)
Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

WASHINGTON—Budget cuts imposed by sequestration will leave the Defense Department with a hollow force and debilitating shortfalls, the Pentagon's top acquisition chief said today.

At a conference at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, outlined the difficultly that the ongoing budget sequester is causing in the department's ability to plan for the future.

"This is probably the worst time I've seen … in terms of our ability to do a sound plan and execute it with any kind of confidence at all," he said. "It is one of the worst environments I've ever seen to try to manage in, in the Pentagon."

Sequestration's across-the-board cuts, mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011, require DoD to make $500 billion in cuts over 10 years, in addition to a previously planned $470 billion cut.

"It's a deep cut," Kendall said. "We took 10 percent out—we took $50 billion out a couple of years ago per year. Sequestration takes another $50 billion per year—that's a large cut below the level we thought we needed to defend the country."

"So there's the steepness of the cut, which forces some very difficult choices," he said. "There's a lack of a ramp … [where] you can gracefully make changes and not do them abruptly," describing them as almost unmanageable and leading to a force that "you could call hollow."

The acquisition chief noted the department will not have enough training, acquisition, or investments.

"So one way or the other, over those next three years, until we can get force structure out, we're going to have shortfalls that are going to be debilitating to the department," Kendall said. "There's no avoiding that … if sequestration stays in place."

Kendall said the department essentially started "damage limitation" in fiscal year 2013.

"Sequestration was imposed in the spring and what everybody did was try to find a way to get by with eight percent less than they thought they were going to have," he said. "That's essentially what we did."

The department "moved some money around within our reprogramming authorities that Congress gave us to help readiness primarily. We deferred work that we could delay to presumably FY14. But that was assuming sequestration went away."

Kendall said there is no money in fiscal year 2014 to do that deferred work, and in fact, if sequestration remains, over $50 billion will have to be taken out of fiscal year 2014.

"We're operating at a rate which we hope is consistent with sequestration as much as possible so we don't have the kind of problem we had last year," he said.

Kendall noted DoD didn't lower its operating rate earlier last year, which resulted in civilian furloughs, which "we have every hope and every intention of not having to repeat."

"But that being the case, we've got to get the spending down now. We can't wait until January ... otherwise we're just setting up a bill for ourselves, particularly in the readiness accounts further on."

Of all the problems sequestration has caused, Kendall said he thinks the worst is the uncertainty the department is experiencing now.

"We don't know what to plan for. So if we don't know where we're going to go, it's very hard to figure out how we're going to get there," he said.

Pentagon Official Outlines Advantages of Open Architecture

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 12, 2013)
Amaani Lyle

WASHINGTON—Weapons systems upgrades and access to wider innovation require a keener approach in design interfaces, particularly their functional and physical improvements, the assistant secretary of defense for acquisition said today during Defense Daily's Open Architecture Summit.

During her keynote speech, Katrina G. McFarland described open architecture as the rapid insertion of technologies with a focus on growth of capability in a system's functional design to maintain optimal performance for the warfighter.

"When we buy systems, ... we have to maintain and hold [them] for a long period of time without being able to upgrade, because we're locked into a design," McFarland said. "I want to have the ability to pull [a] component out and upgrade it in the future."

Whether for a gun that fires multiple rounds or a sensor with greater frequency bands, McFarland said, the Defense Department will seek to enhance a system's capability to preserve its investment principal, which she said will, in turn, help the department keep its competitive edge.

From a business perspective, she continued, open architecture enables engineers to build the next-generation system while fielding a current system, creating opportunities for competition and controlling long-term costs. "The challenge as an engineer is to create that architecture so that it allows for growth for interoperability as well as systems performance," McFarland said.

The assistant secretary acknowledged the complexities of interoperability, specifically the need for swift, quality communication among multiple weapons systems. "That architecture is hard," she said. "It's meaningful, but it's hard."

McFarland said she's worked diligently on the Defense Acquisition Board in the creation of interfaces to determine the best method of purchasing data rights from industry and inserting them into systems. Many didn't understand their rights to assert for use of intellectual property and data rights, she said.

"[It's] important for us to fully understand, because we are ... serving the public with funds to create capability for our nation," McFarland said. "We want to make use of public money the best way we can."

And fortunately, McFarland asserted, industry is rising to task.

"Not only are they doing it, but they're doing it faster, because they recognize this is a very good way of preserving their engineering expertise," McFarland said. "Instead of waiting for the next opportunity to come along, ... they're actually doing something to build for the next capability—and it's critical for our future."

As some leadership views evolve to reflect strengthening of engineering expertise during downsizing, companies that have invested in research and development nonetheless have come out ahead, McFarland said. But open architecture wasn't an overnight epiphany, she noted, adding that continuous process improvement has been a mainstay for about 40 years.

Among the more visible examples of that, McFarland said, is the Defense Department's Better Buying Power initiative, now on its second iteration, which pared some 312 DoD initiatives to 23.

One initiative of note is "achieving affordable programs," which McFarland described as often misunderstood, because it is more about determining how a program fits into a Service branch's needs, versus simply seeking cost reduction.

But in other initiatives to reduce spending, McFarland said, the Government Accountability Office announced this year that DoD had beaten independent cost estimates by a couple of points. "We want to see that emphasized throughout the department and reduce redundancy," McFarland said. Those savings should continue through sustained efforts to explain cost burdens to industry, she added.

McFarland noted the challenges of contracting and emphasized the importance of the Defense Department relating to industry what it really needs and providing incentive for in-

dustry to meet those outcomes by engaging with the people involved.

"If you really are in the process of exploration [and] innovation [for] complex weapons systems, you may seek best value," she said. "You may put an affordability cap on the table to industry, but you may make trades."

She cited an example that she called a "remarkable effort"—the Air Force's Three Dimensional Expeditionary Long-Range Radar, or 3DELRR—a next-generation, mobile, long-range surveillance system.

"The folks in the Air Force really got it," McFarland said, lauding their "bright minds and uniquely innovative ideas on how to get best value on the table."

That type of trade space gives industry the opportunity to bring innovative ideas to the table, but understanding what is technically acceptable before building is vital in that best-value equation, McFarland said.

"These tools are there to provide an opportunity incentive to industry to be still innovative while money disappears," McFarland said. "And architecture is definitively one of those areas."

Welsh: Air Force Will Resist 'Requirements Drift' in New Bomber

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 13, 2013)
Jim Garamone

WASHINGTON—The Air Force's long-range strike bomber program continues to ramp up, and senior leaders are determined that the platform will come in on budget and on time, the Service's top officer told the Defense Writers Group today.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III told the group that any change to the requirements for the long-range strike bomber program must go through him.

"And I don't intend to approve anything until I am absolutely convinced that it makes sense to change the requirement," he added.

The bomber program is needed, Welsh said, noting that the newest B-52 Stratofortress entered the Air Force fleet in the early 1960s. The last B-1B Lancer bomber was delivered to the Air Force in 1988, and the last B-2 Ghost stealth bomber entered the inventory in 2000.

"The important thing is we need a bomber fleet in case—God forbid—we have to conduct a large-scale campaign," Welsh said. "We need a sufficiently sized bomber fleet to do that."

Current plans call for the new aircraft to enter the inventory in 10 years. The Air Force is spending $440 million on the program this year, but that cost will rise to $1 billion next year. This increase enables the Air Force to plan how to integrate the bomber and its systems, Welsh said.

The aircraft's operational capabilities will remain secret.

"Cost is an independent variable on this playing field, because we have to field this platform," Welsh said.

At a cost of $550 million per aircraft, he added, "we can field a meaningful platform that will be effective in the future warfight."

The bomber will not feature a leap in technology, the general said, but it's going to be a very capable machine.

"What we don't want to do is reach into some level of technology that is impractical," he added. "That's where prices start getting out of control."

The Air Force must resist "requirements drift," Welsh said, and it will not keep adding to the requirements base for a platform without proven technology.

"We are not going to go there," he told reporters.

New Contracting Agency Stand Up Increases AF Flexibility

AIR FORCE NEWS SERVICE (NOV. 14, 2013)

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—The Air Force Installation Contracting Agency officially stood up during a transition ceremony here Nov. 13.

Following manpower cuts last year, Air Force leaders designed AFICA, a field operating agency that reports directly to the deputy assistant secretary for contracting, to ensure bases around the world receive the installation contracting services they need to remain mission-ready.

"This new field operating agency will help us usher in a new era of support to our customers by maximizing our precious and scarce resources," said Maj. Gen. Wendy Masiello, the deputy assistant secretary for contracting.

The re-designation will not require personnel to move from their current location, as the organization intends to take advantage of virtual environments. AFICA will maintain existing contracting staffs as operating locations at each supported major command headquarters along with specialized contract execution capability at current locations supporting Air Education and Training Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Mobility Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and Pacific Air Forces. The main benefit of the redesign is to continue to meet the MAJCOM mission needs through deliberate alignment of workload and resources, and elimination of duplication of effort.

On Oct. 1, AFICA achieved initial operating capability by consolidating the manpower and functions of eight major command contracting staffs, the Enterprise Sourcing Group, and five specialized execution units into the Field Operating Activity. The Enterprise Sourcing Group has been redesignated as AFICA and is headquartered here.

By design, AFICA assumes a role in Air Force contracting oversight, specialized execution, and strategic sourcing.

"The complex demands on today's Air Force installations mean that AFICA must operate at peak efficiency to deliver the needed services on time and on cost," said Brig. Gen. Casey Blake, the AFICA commander. "We are ready for the challenge."

Composed of more than 700 personnel at 17 locations spanning 14 time zones, AFICA will support customers at eight major commands: Air Combat Command, AETC, Air Force Global Strike Command, AMC, AFSOC, Air Force Space Command, PACAF, and USAFE. Air Force Materiel Command and Air Force Reserve Command are not a part of the AFICA structure.

AFICA will continue to implement programs and standardize processes as it works toward full operating capability on Oct. 1, 2014.

Harrison Outlines Priorities, ACC's Challenges

U.S. ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND (NOV. 15, 2013)
Edward G. Worley

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala.—The Army Contracting Command commanding general outlined his priorities and gave the ACC/ECC headquarters staffs their first glimpse of transformation initiatives.

During a town hall meeting here Nov. 12, Brig. Gen. Theodore C. Harrison laid out initial information about how the Army-directed 25 percent cuts at two-star and above headquarters may affect ACC.

Harrison said his top priorities included ensuring "a climate of trust, dignity, and respect." He said that was especially true when it comes to combating sexual harassment and sexual assault.

"We need to create a climate where people feel comfortable to come forward and report it," he added, saying the Army as a whole "has work to do."

Turning to the headquarters reduction, Harrison announced a window will be opened for HQ ACC non-contract specialist (career program 1102) employees to apply for early retirement and separation under the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments. The window will be open for three weeks beginning Nov. 18 and close at 5 p.m. Central Standard Time Dec. 6.

To help HQ employees understand their options, the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Human Capital began a series of training and information sessions on Nov. 13.

He is also focused on preparing the command to operate in a climate of declining budgets. He expects sequestration and declining budgets to be around for the foreseeable future.

Harrison said the big challenge facing the command is "how does ACC look to support the Army of 2020." He established a transformation team to look at the headquarters structure and to "think outside the box. I want some bold ideas."

One change coming in fiscal year 2014 is further integration of the ACC and ECC headquarters staffs. With the exception of the commanders' personal staffs, the two headquarters will share staff functions. The ECC will retain its focus on expeditionary contracting.

Harrison said the next four to five years will be challenging and pledged to keep the staff informed. He plans to conduct quarterly town hall meetings, but said they could be held more often as the environment changes.

Director: DARPA Focuses on Technology for National Security

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (NOV. 15, 2013)
Cheryl Pellerin

WASHINGTON—Projects undertaken by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency may have some immediate applications, but what program managers there re-

Brig. Gen. Ted C. Harrison, commanding general, Army Contracting Command, discusses the future of the command with ACC and Expeditionary Contracting Command headquarters' staff members during a Nov. 12 town hall meeting.
U.S. Army photo

ally look to do is blow open new sets of opportunities from deep research, DARPA Director Arati Prabhakar said here yesterday.
Speaking to a large audience at the Defense One Summit and to viewers online, the electrical engineer with a doctorate in applied physics described DARPA-funded work underway to help the warfighter in information technology and brain function.

"Our focus is always breakthrough technologies for national security. We want to show that radically new things are going to be possible," Prabhakar told interviewer Barbara Starr of CNN.

"I also think this is a great example of much broader societal issues that come up when you're working at the forefront of these kinds of technologies," the director said, naming synthetic biology, new materials, and privacy concerns related to "big data" as DARPA research topics deserving of public debate.

For the warfighter on the ground today, DARPA research in information technology is more about using the kinds of capabilities readily available in civilian apps and smartphones in the combat theater, Prabhakar said. When soldiers on patrol in Afghanistan are trying to understand the local environment, she noted, they do that largely with paper maps.

"Yes, we have a lot of information about what's going on," Prabhakar said, "but it's not down in the hands of the soldier." In the last few years DARPA initiated a program called Transformative Apps that dealt with some of the hard security and other challenges of using Android smartphone technology in theater, Prabhakar said.

"What we did essentially," she explained, "was get these Android devices in the hands of soldiers who were going out on patrols every single day and gave them the ability to carry a lot of map data to know where they were, track what was going on in the local community, and share that information with each other."

But DARPA went further, the director added.

"We've now got that ability in theater, so soldiers come back and say, 'This really worked, I need this app. But what would be great would be this next capability.' And our developers are working with them in real time to develop those new apps, so our capability keeps growing," Prabhakar said.

Soldiers tell DARPA that what would be useful for the next generation of capabilities are things like getting records of what other foot patrols find as they do their work and combining that information into a data picture, she said.

"Or," Prabhakar imitates a soldier explaining his or her needs: 'I talked to this farmer, and I found out what crops he was growing and I want to be able to track that. But now I have information I know I can hand off to the next patrol that's coming in for the next period of time.' Those were the kinds of very pragmatic things that were extremely helpful once they got this basic tool," she explained.

At the other end of the research spectrum, for the warfighter on the ground tomorrow and beyond, DARPA is funding research that combines its work in prosthetics and its research into brain function.

"I think we're just at the beginning of a very long and interesting journey," Prabhakar said. "There has been such an interesting set of advances in neuroscience in the last few years, and DARPA has started putting some of those advances to work."

Some of the work is driven by DARPA program manager and physician Dr. Geoffrey Ling, an Army colonel who retired last year and who has been working for several years with DARPA on prosthetics for wounded veterans, the director said.

"Geoff returned from theater convinced that we had to find a way to advance prosthetics capabilities for our wounded veterans," Prabhakar explained. Ling was trained as a neurointerventionist, she added, a surgical specialty in which doctors treat conditions and diseases such as cerebral aneurysms, head and neck tumors, and strokes.

"To him, the starting point was to understand the brain," she said. "He launched a program that did two different things we're now bringing together. One was to develop a very sophisticated prosthetic arm. The other was to do the animal work to understand where the signaling for motor control happens in the brain and how we can start using those signals to control the world around us."

Based on that work DARPA began human trials in the last year. One of the earliest patients was a longtime quadriplegic named Jan, Prabhakar said, describing how the woman volunteered to have a small array implanted on the surface of her brain.

At the conference, the director showed a video in which Jan, five months after surgery, used ports on the top of her head from which electrical signals are taken to use her thoughts to control a robotic arm linked to a computer.

In the video, Jan showed an amazed reporter that she could easily move the arm left and right, up and down, then shake his hand and even give him a fist bump as she sat smiling but motionless on the bed.

"Can you imagine," Prabhakar asked the audience, "if we can do that kind of control of prosthetics—very natural, graceful control, not one finger at a time, but the way we move our limbs today? Then, as you start thinking about what we're learning, think about how we might build all kinds of complex systems because of what we understand about how the human brain interacts with them."

Asked about applications of such technology beyond restoring lost limbs, the DARPA director recalled being on a Virginia-class submarine and watching its operation, which involved multiple large screens and interactive touch displays.

"Imagine if we could move beyond that in the future, without having ports on top of your head, but perhaps wirelessly going directly from brain signal to a very sophisticated level of control. Rather than pushing buttons on a screen or moving levers, being able to orchestrate a very complex system," Prabhakar said.

"That is the door that is opened by this kind of research," she added, "and frankly, it's both exhilarating and terrifying." Still, she said, DARPA must continue to push the frontiers of technology.

"That is literally our day job and our core mission," she said. "We also try very hard to raise these broader ethical issues and societal issues, because well beyond the period of our research, society has some important choices to make."

Paladin Hybridizes for Future Fleet

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (NOV. 18, 2013)
Marie Berberea

FORT SILL, Okla.—The Fires Center of Excellence Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate here, is celebrating a major victory after the Paladin Integrated Management program received Milestone C approval within the Defense Acquisition System.

This Materiel Development Decision moves the project from the engineering design phase of the acquisition process into the manufacturing and production phase.

"This is a big win for the Army and the Field Artillery," said Col. Michael Hartig, with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Capability Manager Brigade Combat Team Fires,

or TCM BCT Fires. "It's a big win for us for years to come."

The last time a weapon system was approved for production on this scale without an urgent needs statement from theater was probably the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

"In today's economic situation with the defense budget, you're not going to get a new start. This is about as close as you can get to a new platform without being a new start," said Hartig.

"It's a huge improvement on what we currently have. The PIM (Paladin Integrated Management) is the same gun, same M109A6 fires delivery capabilities, but the hull—the bottom of the vehicle—is brand new."

The PIM has a higher profile than the current Paladin and was redesigned to accept components of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, such as the engine, transmission, and tracks. Hartig said 27 percent of its parts are used on the Bradley, which will save the Army money in production costs, parts inventory, and in training maintenance personnel.

The Paladin Integrated Management fires during testing at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. The PIM program recently received approval to manufacture and produce the Paladin hybrid weapon system.
DARPA photo

"The engine, the transmission, the road wheels, the torsion bars—that's what costs units money. If you deploy and have a maintenance issue, you have the ability to cross level parts from other organizations within the [armored brigade combat team]," said Hartig.

The new cab has more space with an all-electric system to replace the hydraulic system of its predecessor. The PIM also uses the 600-volt system from the Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon, which will provide enough power for future technologies.

"The logic is whatever the [armored brigade combat team] comes up with: if the Bradley gets a new [command and control or C2] device, we can put a new C2 device on ours. We can finally keep up with what our maneuver brothers are doing," said Hartig.

The PIM has more armor to protect soldiers inside as well as added technology that will alleviate the need to expose crew members operating crew served weapons from open hatches.

Doug Brown, deputy TCM BCT Fires, said the lack of protection for the crew chief was the number one complaint on the Paladin and the Field Artillery Ammunition Supply Vehicle in theater. To fix that problem the PIM can accommodate the common remote operating weapon system , known as CROWS.

"Instead of getting out of the turret to fire, you can do it inside the weapon using a screen. They are also making it possible for not only the crew chief to operate the CROWS, but that soldier will be able to pass it to the gunner or the assistant section chief," said Hartig.

New National Space Transportation Policy Approved

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY–PENTAGON (NOV. 21, 2013)
Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie

WASHINGTON—The President of the United States signed the National Space Transportation Policy Nov. 21, 2013, to ensure continued assured access to space for national security and civil payloads.

The NSTP gives the Air Force the opportunity to work with other U.S. government departments, agencies, Services, and industry partners to ensure the availability of domestic space transportation capabilities that are reliable, efficient, afford-

able, innovative, and competitive in support of the nation's national security needs.

"The Air Force looks forward to engaging with other Services, departments, agencies, and industry partners to further the goals and objectives in this policy and maintain our leadership among space-faring nations," said Acting Secretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning.
This will allow the Air Force to maintain access to the full range of orbits needed to meet the national security interests in an affordable and competitive manner.

"Our space transportation capabilities are vital to our national security," Fanning said. "This policy's vision and direction will help maintain assured access to space into the future."

The National Space Transportation Policy and accompanying fact sheet are available online at http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/library/docsreports.

Army Purchases Bird-Like, Micro-Unmanned Aerial System

ARMY NEWS SERVICE (NOV. 22, 2013)
David Vergun

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Nov. 22, 2013) — The Army recently purchased 36 Maveric unmanned aerial systems as a result of an urgent request from Soldiers in combat.

The request was made to the Rapid Equipping Force, or REF, at Fort Belvoir, Va., in March, and soldiers will receive them by December.

The 36 Maverics, which are not in the Army's current unmanned aerial system, or UAS, inventory, cost $4.5 million and are made by Prioria Robotics Inc., a technology firm in Gainesville, Fla.

The Maveric is classified in the micro-UAS category because it is smaller than the Army's Raven and Puma systems, according to Tami Johnson, project manager, REF.

Maveric will support soldiers at the squad level, she added, while Raven and Puma are company-level tactical assets.

Another difference, she pointed out, is Maveric's wings are flexible and enable the system to naturally blend into the environment.

"Puma and Raven are both dependable systems," she said. "However, this requirement called for a small, subtle capability that could be employed by a single soldier. Maveric meets this unique requirement."

The Army recently purchased 36 Maveric unmanned aerial system vehicles, the same as depicted here, for a special mission. They are smaller than the Raven and Puma, so are considered "micro UAS."
U.S. Army photo

The first operational F-35As are scheduled to arrive at Hill in 2015. The base is projected to receive 72 F-35As, replacing the 48 F-16 Fighting Falcons currently assigned. The F-35A, manufactured by Lockheed Martin, is a fifth-generation fighter aircraft intended to be the Air Force's premier strike fighter aircraft through the first half of the 21st Century. The multirole fighter is expected to eventually replace the Service's F-16 and A-10 fleets.

U.S. Air Force photo by Alex R. Lloyd

Johnson said Maveric can be flown for 60 minutes before it needs to be refueled. It also contains sensors for day, night, or obscured hazy environmental reconnaissance work. The Maveric cruises at 26 knots and dashes up to 55 knots, but more importantly can fly in sustained winds of 20 knots and up to 30-knot gusts.

At this time, the REF has no plans to purchase more Mavericks, but that could change pending Soldier feedback or additional requirements from theater, Johnson said. She added the REF will continue to work closely with the program manager for Army UAS, informing them of any soldier assessments or requirements as they come in.

"We anticipate that the systems will be equipped in late 2013 and we are eagerly awaiting soldier feedback on performance," she said.

Maveric did undergo testing earlier this year at Yuma Test Center in Arizona by the Army Testing and Evaluation Command, which published a Safety Release for Soldier Training, Safety Confirmation, and Capabilities and Limitation report.

Johnson explained the role REF plays in acquiring new technologies:

"As the REF procures emerging capabilities to meet urgent soldier requirements, we are often inserting technologies for the first time and assessing operational performance," Johnson explained. "Maveric UAS is a good news story for the REF. It demonstrates our ability to validate a unique requirement, canvass emerging commercial-off-the-shelf and government-off-the-shelf technologies, and partner with other Army organizations to quickly place capabilities into the hands of soldiers."

Hill Selected to Receive First Operational F-35A Aircraft

75TH AIR BASE WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS (DEC. 3, 2013)

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah—Hill Air Force Base, Utah, was selected as the new home for the Air Force's first operational F-35A Lightning IIs.

Air Force officials chose Hill AFB after a lengthy analysis of multiple locations' operational considerations, installation attributes, and economic and environmental factors.

"Hill AFB is ideally suited to assure a successful path to Initial Operational Capability," said Timothy Bridges, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations. "The nearby Utah Test and Training Range provides access to one of the largest and most diverse airspace and range complexes in

the Air Force. Access to high-quality airspace and ranges is essential for the first operational F-35A wing."

The decision culminates a nearly four-year process that included an extensive Environmental Impact Statement that examined impacts on such factors as air quality, noise, land use, and socioeconomics.

Hill AFB is also home to the F-35 depot, which provides fleet maintenance support, a key factor to the long-term sustainment and readiness of the F-35A fleet.

Another strength of Hill AFB is the already established classic association between the 388th Fighter Wing (active duty) and the 419th Fighter Wing (reserve). This Total Force Integrated unit is capable of providing accelerated seasoning of new personnel to maximize the F-35A's advanced capabilities.

"This is great news for Hill AFB and we welcome the addition of the Air Force's newest, next-generation fighter aircraft," said Col. Lance Landrum, 388th Fighter Wing commander. "The F-35 is critical to ensuring our dominance over the battlefield in today and tomorrow's advanced threat environment. Hill is the perfect place for this weapons system given the nearby Utah Test and Training Range, our existing infrastructure, and continued support from the local community. We look forward to paving the way for its arrival."

"Flying F-35s alongside our active duty counterparts is a great example of the Air Force's 'Total Force' vision, which seeks to increase capability from new technology while leveraging the experience, stability, continuity, and cost effectiveness of our Reserve personnel," said Col. Bryan Radliff, 419th Fighter Wing commander.

"Today's announcement that the fighter wings will host operational beddown of the F-35 Lightning II is certainly great news for Team Hill and the state of Utah," said Col. Kathryn Kolbe, 75th Air Base Wing commander. "Selecting Hill to host America's newest fifth generation fighter is a tribute to the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings' rich heritage. It is fitting the 388th Fighter Wing become the first fully operational F-35 unit, just as it was with the F-16 in January 1979. The selection to place it here speaks volumes to the viability of Team Hill's commitment to our nation's security."

Construction on base to prepare for the aircraft is expected to start almost immediately in order to be ready to accept the first F-35As, which are scheduled to arrive in 2015. The base is projected to receive 72 F-35As, replacing the 48 F-16 Fighting Falcons currently assigned to Hill.

The F-35A, manufactured by Lockheed Martin, is a fifth-generation fighter aircraft intended to be the Air Force's premier strike aircraft through the first half of the 21st Century. It is a multirole fighter that is expected to eventually replace the service's F-16 and A-10 fleets