

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James
Lt Gen Stephen Wilson, AFGSC Commander
Center for Strategic and International Studies
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Secretary James: Thank you very much, Dr. Hicks. Thank you to CSIS for organizing this event today. It's good to see so many folks in the audience many of whom, some of whom anyway, I know. It's good to see old friends and colleagues. I certainly am well familiar and well respectful of CSIS and have been involved with CSIS through the years, both, throughout all of my jobs, really...the House Armed Services Committee, my previous tour in the Pentagon and certainly my time in industry. I'm glad to be back and thank you very much. It's a great opportunity to be here.

I'm also very proud to come here as the 23rd Secretary of the Air Force and I hope after you hear me today I will get invited back because there are many important issues that we can be talking about over time, many important and exciting facets to our Air Force today. Everything from strategy to budget issues to technology, to the industrial base, to the evolving missions that we are performing, and very important people issues that we're facing. So lots to talk about over time. I certainly have begun to scratch the surface in all of these areas during my first eight weeks on the job. That's how long I have now been in the Air Force. But none of the issues really has taken up more time and attention for me in this first eight weeks than the matter that brings us here today to talk to all of you and that is namely our nuclear enterprise.

I think everyone in this audience probably knows, the Air Force is responsible for two of our three legs of our nuclear triad in the United States. We have the ICBMs which provide stability and survivability. And we also have the nuclear capable bombers which provide flexible and visible global force projection.

Our partner, the Navy, operates the third leg of the triad which is the submarine launched ballistic missiles and they provide survivable deterrence at sea.

Now all three legs of this triad are complementary. They are not duplicative, but they're complementary. We have the responsiveness of the ICBMs, the flexibility of the bombers, the survivability of the submarine launched missiles, and the three of these things together enable us to manage risk, provide effective deterrence to prevent an attack, they provide assurance to our allies around the globe, and they also offer our President a range of important options at his disposal.

Some say that the Cold War is over. We don't even need these weapons anymore. I disagree with that. Certainly there is room

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

as there is room in our entire military to build down prudently, and certainly we have begun to do that and we'll be doing that under the New START Agreement. However, I would argue that as the numbers decline the importance of the triad's diverse and complementary attributes will be on the rise and will only go up.

So as long as there are countries around the globe that possess these weapons or countries that are trying to develop these weapons, no mission will be more important than maintaining nuclear deterrence and safeguarding our nation's nuclear capabilities. All of the key leaders in government, from the President on down, agree with this fundamental point. We're all in lock step.

So the nuclear enterprise is very important to our country, it's very important to our Air Force. It is here to stay.

Let me now tell you a little bit about the people. The people who provide this mission, who perform this mission for you and for me.

The Airmen of our nuclear enterprise perform their duties in a variety of locations. Some are in missile silos, some operate as part of bomber crews. And by the way the missile people and the bomber crews are probably the most well-known of the teammates. These are the people who get the most attention. But actually the team of the nuclear enterprise is much broader than that.

The full team also includes security forces who protect these weapons; it includes maintainers on site and at our weapons sustainment depots; it includes people in the program office who keep the modernization and sustainment on time and on track. Flight test personnel who ensure that the weapons are viable. We have stockpile technicians throughout our enterprise. Not to mention a variety of people who are essential to training and to providing support to keep these operations going all the time around the clock.

There's 36,000 people involved in this nuclear enterprise all in all -- 25,000 of whom fall under General Wilson in the Global Strike Command.

Our nuclear enterprise personnel serve in a variety of locations, mostly in the United States but they're in such locations in which many of them are quite remote. So these are places like Minot, North Dakota; Malmstrom in Montana; FE Warren in Wyoming; Hill Air Force Base in Utah; Vandenberg, California; Whiteman AFB, Missouri; and Barksdale, Louisiana.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

I think you'll also be interested to know, I was very interested to learn that this force, the nuclear enterprise force, is actually a younger force than the Air Force at large. This is particularly true in the missile community which is populated with a larger percentage of junior officers and junior enlisted personnel than the rest of the Air Force. And like other parts of our Air Force, this team has been undergoing reductions in force structure, they've had various command arrangements and command structures over time. So it's a team that's undergone quite a bit of change.

Finally, unlike other parts of our Air Force, the day to day success of this team and the greatest service that they provide for our nation is never having to actually execute their responsibilities for real. But nonetheless, always standing ready to do so if called upon. That is major success for this team. It's unlike every other team in the Air Force. So the bottom line is that this is quite a unique team. It's unlike all the others. It's very very important to our national security and yet we face some important challenges.

As all of you know, we have announced publically that there are 92 missile crew members, all of them young officers, at Malstrom Air Force Base in Montana, that have some level of involvement with a cheating incident involving a monthly proficiency test which was originally administered back in the August/September timeframe.

Some of these officers were directly involved with the cheating, others knew something about it but they failed to stop it and they failed to report it.

So this particular story began to unfold actually during either my second or third week on the job. So the first question that I asked and that I wanted to know about, and I'm sure it was on the minds of many, given what has happened, "Is the nuclear mission safe and secure?" So let me first cut to the chase on that one.

I am very convinced that the answer to this is yes. The nuclear mission is safe and secure and the reason for this is that one proficiency test does not make or break anything. There are many checks and balances within the system. There are outside inspections that take place regularly. There are simulator experiences that take place continually. So there are many ways that we look at the proficiency individually as well as how these teams operate. So one test does not make or break anything.

In addition, shortly after we became aware of this, we retested the entire missile community within about a 48 hour period. And that produced a very high pass rate, 95.5 percent pass rate.

So my point is, I am convinced that the mission is safe and secure, but nonetheless, we are left with what was absolutely a major failure of integrity on the part of some Airmen. So how did this happen and what should we do about it? More importantly, what should we do about it?

Believe me, I'm asking these questions but I'm not the only one. General Welsh has been asking these questions, General Wilson has been asking these questions, Secretary Hagel very much is in search of answers. He's concerned, as you know, Secretary Hagel has established an internal review group to ensure that we in the Air Force sit down with the Navy and OSD and the Joint Staff and that we work together on the nuclear enterprise going forward. He's also directed us to submit an action plan within 60 days on what we intend to do about this matter, and he's also established an independent review group led by Larry Welsh and John Harvey, which is also on a fast track to look at certain matters.

The week after we announced the cheating incident, I personally decided I wanted to go on the road and I wanted to see more and learn more for myself directly. General Welsh did exactly the same thing. We were not together on our trips. We were crisscrossing the country, but ultimately we hit the same locations and we spread out and talked to as many people as possible.

So speaking from my perspective, at each of my stops which included FE Warren, Malmstrom, Minot and the Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale, I received command briefs, I took tours, I learned about the mission first-hand, and very importantly, I talked directly to Airmen. And I did this in large townhall environments, but I also did it in small what I call focus group environments. And these focus group environments, by the way, it was just me and the Airmen. There were no commanders, no note takers; it was just me and the Airmen and we chatted. We chatted and during the course of these focus groups I spoke not only with the missileers and I did speak with the missileers, but also the security forces, the maintenance, the support people, the facilities personnel. All the people that I talked to you about earlier. I got a microcosm of all of the different types of teammates. And what I learned in all of these settings was actually very enlightening.

So based on all of these discussions and the tours and the travel, as well as some other research, I came up with what I called my seven observations from the trip. All of these seven areas will be addressed as part of our action plan that we owe the Secretary of Defense after 60 days, and that action plan and

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

how we develop it is going to be the subject of what General Wilson will talk to you about in just a few minutes.

So here are my seven observations.

The first one goes to the heart of the question that I get asked a lot, and I think a lot of people wonder about, and that is is there something widespread? Is there something cultural? Is there something bigger than just this particular incident going on within our missile community? Again, based on my trip, based on the talking that I've done, based on the focus groups, based on the review of past studies, and there have been a number of past studies done in recent years on this matter, I believe that in fact we do have some systemic problems in the force.

I picked up on morale issues as I went from place to place. Morale is, the way I put it, spotty. There were pockets of high morale, but then there were pockets of low morale. I picked up on what I call the need for perfection. The need for perfection has created a climate of what I think is undue stress and fear among the missile community about their futures, and I'll come back and explain more about this in a moment.

I heard repeatedly that the system in its totality is very punitive, comes down very hard, even in the case of what seems to be very minor infractions, but it is not equally rewarding and incentivized for good behavior and good developments. I heard about micromanagement. I also heard in many quarters that we as leaders talk about the importance of this community, talk about the importance of the mission, but do we then back that talk up with concrete action? I heard that question over and over again. And again, it wasn't just Malmstrom where the cheating incident occurred. I heard it at every place I visited.

So my first observation, I do think we have some systemic things going on and I do think that in order to fix the systemic problem you need a holistic approach. To just go after the incident of cheating is not adequate. And so I think holistic is the way to go.

My second observation has to do with testing. The way we are using test scores. So the way we are using test scores, at least it seems to me in this community, appears to be breeding an unhealthy climate. Now here's what I mean by that.

When it comes to monthly proficiency tests of which the missileers take three such tests every month, scoring 90 percent on any of these tests is the standard. This is an acceptable grade, this shows proficiency. When the missileer meets the standard, that's good, but it's insufficient by itself, the

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

missileers also have to perform well on periodic simulations and other forms of outside inspections and evaluations. So once he or she demonstrates the proficiency on the monthly exam as well as comes through with flying colors on these other kinds of evaluations, they are deemed proficient.

Now all of that sounds straightforward enough, except that I didn't come up with a single missileer who felt adequate being able to score a 90 percent. Because if you score 90 percent that means you might get a couple of questions wrong.

What I found is that the missileers felt driven to score 100 percent all the time. This is because the commanders were using the test scores as either the top differentiator or the sole differentiator in this community as to who would get promoted and who would not.

So to me, a huge irony in this whole situation is that these missileers who cheated probably didn't even cheat in order to meet the standard or to pass. It could well be that they cheated in an effort to get 100, 100 all the time because that is the mentality.

So as I said, I don't think the use of test scores in this way is healthy. I don't think it's the right way to measure people, and I would like to see us move to a whole person concept, looking at the entirety of the person's record and their performance on how we then decide on promotions. So testing was my second observation.

The third is accountability and I'll be short and sweet on this one. There is going to be accountability in this matter. There certainly will be appropriate accountability to the individuals who participated in the incident. We're also assessing leadership accountability in this. So there needs to be accountability and there will be. That's my observation number three.

Number four has to do with professional and leadership development and I think we have some work to do here as well.

So the questions in my mind coming out of the trip and coming out of my review of the thought process here are if your career field is well regarded, and this is explained in our commissioning sources. How do we talk about this at the Air Force Academy? When people go through ROTC what are they learning? Is this a career field which feels attractive to young people who are entering the Air Force? Is it or isn't it? If it isn't, what can we do to improve this?

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Once there in the front door, are these Airmen getting the right forms of training, not only on their jobs but on leadership. We place a great premium on leadership in the Air Force. Are they getting appropriate levels of leadership? Do they get the professional mentorship and supervision that I've seen go on elsewhere in the Air Force?

As I mentioned, this is a young force so mentorship and leadership from higher levels is important. Are they getting it?

What are the career path opportunities? Can these officers see a path for advancement? Can they see a path even to the top?

I know in the Navy nuclear officers can see advancement, they can see a path. I'm not sure our people see it the same way.

In short, there's a whole series of questions at least that I'm hoping we can answer and the idea here is to make this career field in fact and in perception something that young Airmen want to do and aspire to do.

The fifth observation is we need to reinvigorate our core values. And just as a reminder, our core values in the Air Force are Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in all we do. And of course this was a major failure of integrity. Integrity first.

So Airmen need to be reminded. We need to look for ways to build this in at all levels throughout their careers. Integrity first means that you not only are charged with acting in a high integrity way yourself, but if you see something going on in your environment that is wrong, integrity requires you to the Air Force first and come forward, let us know about that. So somewhere that went wrong in this instance and we need to make sure that we are taking action to remind people of that throughout their careers.

By the way you've probably seen that Secretary Hagel announced last week that he plans to appoint a general officer to his senior staff who will be working daily with all of us on issues focused on core values, ethics, character, leadership and what not. We want to do this across the board in the military. And certainly we in the Air Force will be an important part of this effort.

Number six observation, as I call it incentives, accolades and recognition. And here is where the questions on my mind at least, should we consider some sort of an incentive pay or some sort of educational benefits for certain types of work in this career field so that it becomes more attractive? They do such

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

things in the Navy. We're learning more about what they do in the Navy. The Navy, of course, is different than the Air Force in the nuclear mission but that's not to say we can't learn some lessons and we're trying to learn and see whether they should apply to us.

What about medals and ribbons and other forms of accolades? This is done elsewhere in the force, should we do it here for the missileers?

So we need to look at all of that, and by the way, we need to not only do those in our officer corps, but we also need to do it for the enlisted force as well because they are working extremely hard under what are arduous conditions as well.

The last observation is what I call other investments. This gets to the point of okay, we say this is a very important mission, but do we put enough of our money where our mouth is. This is everything. Should we consider some additional funding to either increase the manning levels or to give a higher priority to certain forms of military construction or maintenance. There are quality of life issues, perhaps we should address. I mentioned earlier these are sometimes remote locations, so quality of life counts.

So there's a specific cheating incident. We certainly are going to get to the bottom of that. But in so doing, as I mentioned earlier, we are going to take a holistic approach and look at the totality of our nuclear enterprise. I do not have anything nor does General Wilson have anything specific to update on that incident. So we don't have any new reports of that nature but this is again, designed to be a holistic approach going forward. It is comprised of an approach that involves senior level persistent oversight from the SecDef on down. It will include this comprehensive action plan to address all of these observations as well as some others that are coming up along the way.

You may have noticed each of my seven observations directly relate and focus on people. I think people are the core of this, so getting this done right for people in the future will be key to us moving forward.

I want to wrap up now and give it over to General Wilson, but before I do, just one more reassurance to everybody. Although this was a bad failure of integrity on the part of certain Airmen it was not a failure of the mission. The mission is safe and secure. I'm very confident of that. General Haney¹, Strategic

¹ Admiral Cecil Haney is the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Command Commander is confident, and so is the Secretary of Defense, and so is the leadership of the Air Force. We are all confident.

I also want to reinforce with you that the vast majority of our Airmen, particularly the vast majority of the 36,000 that are involved with this mission, they are performing superbly. They are working hard. They are doing great work for you and for me and with great pride every day.

As for these challenges, we will address them. People will be held accountable appropriately. We did not get here overnight. I'm sure we will not get everything to fix it done overnight either. But we will get there. Again, persistent focus, persistent leadership, persistent action. That's what we're going to deliver here.

General Wilson, over to you.

Lt Gen Wilson: Thank you Madam Secretary and Dr. Hicks for inviting us to this forum and for allowing me a few moments to speak about something that's near and dear to my heart.

I flew in last night from FE Warren Air Force Base where it was actually a balmy day yesterday. It was in the low 30s with wind chills in the 20s. And yet our maintainers and operators and defenders were going about their job. It was a completely different experience than I had this last week when I was in Minot Air Force Base, but I got the opportunity to spend a week last week at Minot and it was a very informative visit for me on both fronts. But I got to visit the members of the 91st Missile Wing as well as the 10th Bomb Wing to see what they do every day, from the young defenders who are preparing the convoys to support the weapons out in the field; the missile maintenance crews are actually doing the job in the field to the helicopter crew flew me back from the field. And what I saw was pride and dedication in everything that they were doing. Let me give you a couple, so you can kind of see the experience I had.

I got to ride in a bear cat with a lieutenant convoy commander as we took a weapon out to the field. We spent two hours that day going out there. It was -18 was the temperature. That was not what the wind chill was. It was -50 in the wind chill. The lieutenant told me about how much he enjoyed driving the bear cat compared to the up-armored Humvee. That this was so much nicer and so much warmer.

This is a guy that, me, came from Louisiana. I was wearing my Louisiana boots. My feet were frozen solid. My outside leg I couldn't feel it, and you wouldn't have known that from this

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

young defender. He was really proud of the job he was doing and he had a bounce in his step along the way.

So when we arrived at the facility there, the maintenance team got into action. I have a hard way to describe it, other than it was like in an Indy 500 pit crew, not in the speed, but in the precision of what they did. They were truly exceptional. If you could have seen that team and how they performed, I think everybody in this room would have been truly inspired.

I also got to meet a second lieutenant up there, and just like every second lieutenant, you've got so much energy and can-do spirit. He's in the civil engineering squadron. So Lieutenant Lund, brand new, he's been in the Air Force for six months. He's also in charge of the largest construction project in our Air Force this next year. Minot Air Force Base has got one of the oldest runways in the Air Force and we're going to fix it, repair it. But it's a single runway at a major bomber base and to do that is not easy. So it's been a three year effort. One year replace one end of the runway, the next year the other end of the runway, and this year we'll replace the whole center section. It's a \$42 million project and it's being led by a second lieutenant. He's knocking it out of the park.

So it's impressive to see some of these young officers and young enlisted folks as they do their mission.

I can tell you there was actually a bounce in the step of the folks at Minot because they'd just come through two major inspections. Both the 5th Bomb Wing and the 91st Missile Wing - they'd undergone a Nuclear Surety Inspection as well as a Nuclear ORI. And you know it's a good day when the inspectors step up and say we don't have to talk about any unsatisfactories or marginal or satisfactories because the team here only scored excellents or outstandings. It was a great day.

Now this isn't from my command inspection team. Well, it was but it was also independent agencies. We had the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. We had the Joint Staff. We had the STRATCOM Staff, we had the Air Force IG as part of that inspection team that oversaw the efforts. So the team really did well. You could see it in their pride and everything they were doing there at Minot.

As the Secretary mentioned, in spite of all the good things going on we have some challenges in our force, so let me address a couple of things that we're doing right now and the efforts underway.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Lt Gen Mike Holmes, he's the Vice Commander at Air Education and Training Command, is leading a Command Directed Investigation that I stood up a couple of weeks ago. He's on the fourth of fifth legs. He's leaving Minot this morning and he's going to Malmstrom Air Force Base. I directed him to do an outside, independent investigation to look at how we test, train and evaluate our ICBM forces. Secondary, I wanted him to give me an assessment of the culture and the leadership environment. It's really an easy call, reaching out to General Holmes. First of all, he's in the training business and I don't think there's anybody who understands the training business better than him. And he's done that for many years. He's going to help us clear up the blurred lines between training and evaluation, that's going on in our missile wings.

His report is due to me at the end of the month. General Holmes' investigation is just one of the few ongoing efforts that I've been tasked to do. One of the other efforts that I think will produce the greatest change in our force is something I'm calling the Force Improvement Program. This Force Improvement Program, it's going to utilize a different approach than the things we've done in the past. Instead of the top-down directed approach, this is a bottom-up grassroots-level effort from which we're going to initiate this. We're going to look across all the different disciplines in our missile field. We're going to look at our security forces, our maintenance, our mission support group, our operations as well as our helicopters and how we do business. This is us looking at us, but it's with a twist. Our Force Program Initiative is to identify those challenges and stressors that detract from the mission effectiveness and the morale of our Airmen. It's going to combine inputs from members of all three wings. It's also going to use those junior experts in the field who are doing the job, as well as we're going to ask the families what they think as well as do surveys of the leadership in all the wings.

I'd like to say I can take credit for this idea but I didn't think of it myself. I reached out to our joint teammates who had a similar challenge and gave us this idea. So Vice Admiral Mike Connors, the Commander of the Submarine Forces, he's one of my counterparts, so when I was talking to him about things that they've done in the Navy in the past, things they used that were helpful, he's the one who gave me this basic idea. So not only did we borrow his idea, we borrowed his team who did it. So Mike's inviting his sailors to be part of our team as well as the specific experts that he had on the team to help us in our efforts. And they're going to ask questions that we wouldn't have asked of ourselves.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Another outsider that we've asked to come is Colonel Mike Tichenor. Mike Tichenor is currently the Director of Operations at 8th Air Force. He's got a bomber background. He's also the Director of Task Force 204 which is the Nuclear Reconnaissance Task Force, at Barksdale. So he's going to lead this diverse team, primarily missileers, missile maintainers, defenders, helicopter crews, and other support personnel from across all the bases and on top of that we threw in bomber crew members, both B-52s and B-2s.

Our team also includes external folks of the Air Force Global Strike Command. We invited LtCol Denise Cooper. She's from the Air Force Academy; she's got a PhD in behavioral science. And Ms. Shery Hernandez; she's an expert from Air Education and Training Command. She does curriculum development. She's part of our team.

We also are fortunate to have Mr. Wendy Peck and Dr. William Casey on board. They're both from a group called the Executive Leadership Group and it's a group that creates human performance systems to implement organizational strategy and programs. They were part of the Navy team, now they're also part of our team helping us.

The whole team is about 65 people. They came together a couple of days ago at Barksdale. I gave them the charge in the morning. That evening I talked to each individual group as they moved out. I said here's what I want you to do. I want you to think big and I want you to think bold. Nothing is off the table. As we speak, that team is leaving Barksdale Air Force Base and they're en-route to Minot Air Force Base today. Over the next eight days they'll go to every wing and talk to a variety of persons in the field.

Specifically I've asked them, what are the concerns and then really, what can we do about it?

The work they're going to accomplish, I think, will touch every aspect of the ICBM mission and I think we'll have the opportunity to shape that for the next generation.

Our Force Improvement Program is about taking care of people. As the Secretary said, this primarily is about a people business and their environment. But I've also asked the team to look at how to communicate and how to develop our leaders.

We're going to look at the culture and we're going to determine, we've got an integrity issue and what are those obstacles that we need to overcome in terms of mission and manning and resources and any of those other things we may have out there.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

So at the end of this month I'm going to get an outbrief from both the CDI team as well as the Force Improvement Team and what I'll tell you is I'm committed to changes, and as you heard from the Secretary, so is she, so is the senior leadership of the department.

The changes that I can make at my level, I will. Those that I need the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force's help, I'll take to them. And those that we need to go up to the Secretary of Defense, we'll take them for him.

What I'd also like to tell you is that these efforts are part of the journey. The journey has been going on since 2009 as we strengthen and broaden all the efforts across the nuclear enterprise. The efforts including we stood up Air Force Global Strike Command five years ago. We created a new directorate inside Headquarters Air Force--A10--that oversees the Air Force's nuclear mission. We've tackled some discipline trends. We've improved the ICBM readiness and the bomber readiness across the fleet. We've done lots of personnel actions in terms of personal development programs and education. And we've completed, quite frankly, 92 percent of over 1000 action items identified by previous studies. That's some of the efforts that have been ongoing over the last five years. This is another effort in that journey.

What I would tell you is I think the glide slope's in the right direction. We're making some very positive -- we're making positive developments across the whole length of the force.

I'd like to leave you with this takeaway. Our nation demands and deserves the highest standards of performance and accountability from those entrusted with the world's most powerful weapons. There are over 25,000 people in Air Force Global Strike Command. I want to focus on the 99.5 percent of those people who do an exceptional job every single day defending our nation and deterring our adversaries. They not only abide by but they live our core values. They certainly have integrity, they put service before self and they have excellence in all they do. They're well trained, they're competent, they're proud. The mission that they perform, strategic deterrence, is vital to our nation and our Air Force, as you heard from the Secretary, is committed to the strengthening, broadening and deepening of both the performance where the access, recruit, train, and the mission modernization and human capital across the enterprise.

With that let me stop, say thank you very much, and I'm looking forward to your questions.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Moderator: Let me start with a question which wouldn't have been the one I would have asked before you spoke, but I think both of you covered so much territory it changes somewhat how I see the issue.

One of the things that comes to my mind, Secretary James talked about how many studies occurred in the past, General Wilson your comment that you're close to about having completed 92 percent of the action items that are out there. It does make one wonder if that last eight percent is the hard eight percent. I'm wondering if you can reflect at this point on what you both have looked at, your experiences certainly to date, even beyond this looking into the issue recently. What are those remaining barriers that have made it hard to get at the issues that remain? And what are the tools within the reach of the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Department of Defense? Or will you end up needing help, for instance, from Congress?

Secretary James: Maybe I'll start Dr. Hicks, and then General Wilson, please jump in as well.

In terms of what other remaining barriers might we need help from Congress and so forth. The answer is we don't know yet fully. We'll know so much more when our 60 day review is completed. As to the studies of the past I will say I have certainly reviewed those studies and some of the themes that we've talked about here were mentioned in some of those studies. I don't think, at least not that I recall was this cheating situation brought up in any of the studies, but certainly some of the morale issues have been talked about before, and so forth. So there has been some repetition there.

I think a clear barrier to anything nowadays that one has to think through is money. Money is tight. Resources are not plentiful. But again, if you're committed to a persistent focus, persistent leadership, persistent action, you have to put resources against things that matter. So we'll know a lot more at the end of the 60 days and be able to answer that more fully.

Lt Gen Wilson: One thing I learned, as the Secretary mentioned in her comments, all that we've been doing. We've had years of atrophy probably in the '90s and early 2000's. We've put lots of efforts in the last five or six years across the nuclear enterprise in investments, in everything we do from the people side and on through. So this is part of that journey. I don't think there are any of those things that are not insurmountable. We just need to get after them. The Secretary and I are committed to doing just that.

Question: Brendan McGarry, Military.com.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

You talked about there being some responsibility or accountability for this. Does the Air Force still have confidence in the commander of the 341st Wing? If so, why?

Lt Gen Wilson: Right now we have a Command Directed Investigation underway to look at all the people involved in this. So it would be premature for me to comment on any particular person.

The Secretary has visited the wings, the Chief of Staff has visited the wings. We are confident that people are doing the mission out there. What this investigation comes up with, it will really [inaudible].

Question: I really enjoyed that whole discussion about the cheating. My name is Senara Daniels. I am interested in testing as a function in different organizations. I just wondered, do you think that you're going to continue with that testing load? I know you stress that you wanted to look at the holistic, but it seems to me that if indeed these students were testing above 90 percent and they were looking for the 100, there may be some ways of producing questions or changing the format in a way that would mitigate against cheating since it is probably multiple choice and so forth. I think there are tests that can better test the kinds of capacities you need for these missions.

Secretary James: I'll take a shot at that. Having appropriate tests and evaluations and inspections I think is an essential thing within this community, really all communities to ensure that individuals and teams can perform their duties. So I am certainly in favor of that.

The troubling part to me though was what seemed like the enormous power that these individual proficiencies have and the desire to score 100 seemed to have, and the fact that these were being used as a top or a sole differentiator to determine whether you get promoted or I get promoted. That's produces an unhealthy system.

Now the whole testing regime is part of what is being reviewed as part of the Command Directed Investigation, and as General Wilson said, we have a top officer whose specialization is training looking at this whole area which gives me comfort that we will get to the bottom of this and how to do it appropriately. We certainly need appropriate evaluations and tests, but when it comes to promoting individuals, I do think a whole person concept is what we need to have.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Lt Gen Wilson: That's exactly what this CDI team is looking at and it's how we train, test and evaluate. Teams of about 10 people and they looking at exactly the questions you asked.

Question: Jon Harper with Stars & Stripes.

I know that the review that you're undertaking is still ongoing, but can you share any preliminary conclusions that you've reached? Also the Navy doesn't seem to have any of the same problems within its nuclear missile force that the Air Force is having. Why do you think that's the case?

Lt Gen Wilson: I can't give you any new information in terms of the ongoing Command Directed Investigation.

In terms of the Force Improvement Program, it's starting today. It's kickoff, they're heading to Minot Air Force Base as we speak. I can't comment on what the Navy does or doesn't do. I can tell you that what we're focused on is what we have in front of us now. The Secretary talked about, she walked in on week two of this and we're meeting this head on across the spectrum of things we've discussed.

Question: [Inaudible]?

Secretary James: No.

Question: Thank you very much. Aaron Mehta, Defense News.

Secretary James, you defended the three legs of the triad in your opening comments. There's one other aspect you didn't mention which is the missiles attached to the fighters that are in Europe. There's been talk that maybe that's a mission that given the cost needs to be looked at potentially moved away from.

A two-part question. The first is, is that something the Air Force is looking at, potentially moving away from?

Secondly, former Chief of Staff Schwartz in a speech recently said he believes the F-35 should not be made nuclear capable. That money should be spent elsewhere. Is that something that you agree with or are looking at?

Lt Gen Wilson: I think we're committed to [inaudible] of our allies. I don't think there's anything that we're looking at that would change that [inaudible]. Former Chief of Staff Schwartz's article, I saw that same thing too, and I really am not able to comment on it. That was his opinion.

Question: My name is [inaudible] from Business Times.

[Inaudible] in India [inaudible] 60-plus U.S. [inaudible]. That shows that India is a big market for [inaudible]. As we said in the [inaudible] nuclear energy, there are a lot of prospects, [inaudible]. [Inaudible] on the nuclear area [inaudible].

Moderator: That's probably wide outside the scope of what we're talking about today. I'll let you comment if you like, but --

Secretary James: I regret that this is outside the scope of what we're talking about today so I'm afraid I don't have a good answer for you.

Question: Graham Jenkins, [inaudible] Corporation.

The Air Force has done a pretty good job with trying to consolidate the nuclear enterprise. But within Headquarters Air Force you still have two separate groups with very conflicting missions. You've got A5XP which does arms control and A10 which does more of the planning side. Would combining those two help someone with morale and mixed messages from the top? Are there any plans for that?

Secretary James: I'll say that we're working across the board at the headquarters elements and looking for ways where we could effectively combine and put teams together. You're aware we're also trying to reduce our headquarters by -- The Secretary of Defense has asked us all to reduce by 20 percent. We're actually trying to take it down to a little bit above that. We'll see if we get there or not. So everything is on the table but it's a little premature to talk to that directly.

Question: This is [inaudible]. I'm a teacher of the distant learning course on Nuclear Policy for AFIT.

The emphasis of the Secretary and General Wilson indicated certainly ways of helping focus the attention of the people involved on the nuclear mission which has always been positive. As part of that culture, do the people in the missile wings understand why we got to the particular status we have in our nuclear mission. It's been a long long time since weapons were first used, a long time since the end of the Cold War. There's certainly an understanding of what happened in the past, what questions were asked, how they were answered in different eras under different conditions. It would probably be an interesting aspect of improving the culture, I would think.

Secretary James: Maybe again I'll start, but General Wilson, please jump in.

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

Based on my observations, I would say that the missile teams are very up to speed with current world conditions, current threats. So in that regard they're inspired by knowing that there are dangers in the world and how they fit into the overall equation of deterring those dangers and protecting our country.

Now as to the heritage and so forth I'm a little bit less clear, but that's an interesting idea. I think living your legacy it's something that inspires all of us. So that might be an area that we could work more on.

Lt Gen Wilson: I agree. So I think our missile crews today understand and get it. It may not be ingrained across the fabric of our Air Force like it should. So as part of our development, what we're going to do at every level, from everything from Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, Air War College, we're going to strengthen and continue to strengthen the message that we tell folks about what our nuclear weapons do, what deterrence is, how it's used, how do we deter our adversaries. That's part of this professional development course that we'll spread throughout the fabric of our Air Force.

Question: Randall Ford with Raytheon Company.

The Air Force Academy has been mentioned a number of times in your comments. My understanding is the Academy has a standard that a cadet will not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do. So I'm curious of the 90 cheaters at Malmstrom, were any of them Air Force Academy graduates? And if so, has that given you any cause to go back and look at some of the fundamental cultural issues at the Air Force Academy and the kind of standards and ethics that they teach and instill in their graduates?

Secretary James: I'll take a shot at that. I'm not sure as to the first part of your question, but as to what do we need to do at the Academy, it so happens my next trip, which will be later today if I can beat the snow, is I'm headed to the Air Force Academy. Again, this is a trip that I had planned anyway, but now given this body of work that we're engaged in, this is a particular area that I'm going to talk to the Superintendent a great deal about and to understand more fully how is it that cadets end up in certain career fields versus other career fields and how are the various career fields talked about and what sorts of education they receive at the Academy, about the different parts of the Air Force and the heritage and so forth. So this is a line of questions that I'll be talking about over the next few days, as a matter of fact.

LtGgen Wilson: Also the Secretary talked about this reinvigorating core values and education, across all the

James - CSIS - 2/12/14

commissioning sources. So to get to your question, yes. All commissioning sources were involved here--ROTC, the Academy and OTS. That's why this effort is going to be for core values across our Air Force and not just for missileers, but across our Air Force.

Question: Brian Everstine with Air Force Times.

Can you give us an update on the OSI investigation? Where things stand there? Are we still looking at just Malmstrom and just the August/September timeframe? And if you said it's systemic, how likely is it that it just stays there? Also the drug investigation that sparked this.

Question: Justin Anderson, SCIC. For Secretary James.

In recent years there have been a number of think tank analyses that suggest that ICBMs may be redundant. While those are outside of government, missileers are immune to the suggestion that their jobs might not be important in the future. So I wonder if you could respond to the conclusions of those studies that ICBMs might not be important to the future of the nuclear mission.

Secretary James: As to the first question, we don't have anything new to share on the investigation aspects. So it is ongoing but we promised transparency, and as you know we've updated a couple of times and we will continue to do so, but we just simply don't have anything new on that today.

As to the various studies and opinions that you hear nowadays about we should do away with nuclear weapons or we don't need the triad, it's a diad, different people have different points of view and that's what America is all about. We all have different points of view and we debate things and so forth. But I hope it came across loud and clear what I think. I think we need the triad. It's worked very well for us over the past 50 years. We need it for the next 50 years and probably beyond that as well. It is not duplicative, it is complementary for the various reasons I said, but never mind that I said it. The President has committed to it, the Secretary of Defense has committed to it, all of the people in positions of authority believe this to be the case.

You're right, though, our missileers are well read, they hear these things, they wonder about it. And certainly to the extent I was asked about it, this is the sort of answer to the question I gave them. People have all sorts of points of views about all sorts of things. It doesn't mean that it's going to happen or that the people who are in charge of our government making these decisions feel that way.

Question: [Inaudible].

I wanted to ask, President Obama [inaudible]. So what do you think of this kind of work? Was the job [inaudible] about the picture? And [inaudible] this spring Air Force deployed a nuclear bomber to North Korea. What is your evaluation of the operation?

Moderator: So a global zero question and a B-52 question.

Secretary James: If I heard the question correctly, the bottom line here is that President Obama is committed to the triad and I think for all the same reasons that I tried to articulate, and that was reaffirmed most recently in the nuclear posture review. So that is sort of the bottom line answer to that question.

Lt Gen Wilson: For the B-52s, you're incorrect, they didn't fly over North Korea, they flew over South Korea, and the B-2 did also. So what I would say, as the Secretary talked about the strengths of the triad and the bombers bringing a flexible and visible signal, and that's exactly what it was, a signal, a visible signal, to our allies, to assure both South Korea, Australia and Japan, as well as to deter any adversaries, in this case it sends a very strong message I think to the North Korean regime. At that time had a lot of rhetoric of what we were doing. I think it sent a very powerful signal. The B-2 is an assurance and a deterrence mission.

Question: [Inaudible].

The Air Force has identified it will pursue funding for a next generation bomber. Has there been any discussion on investing in the current legacy fleet, specifically the B-1?

Lt Gen Wilson: I'd say what we are committed to is a new Long Range Strike Bomber. It's one of the Secretary and Chief's top three priorities. And we need one. Our newest bomber, the B-2, is 25 years old. The other ones are older. So as we bring on new airplanes and this new Long Range Strike Bomber, I think the force structure will be looked at in the future. I don't have a good answer in terms of what we'll look at, but I do know we need a new bomber and the Secretary and Chief are committed to getting us one.

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