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**Dubai Air Show Media Event
Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James
Commander, US Air Forces Central Lt Gen CQ Brown
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SECRETARY JAMES: Good morning, everybody. Thank you very much for coming and spending a little bit of time with us this morning. This is my first time at the Dubai Air Show as the Secretary of the Air Force. Of course, I'm here as part of Team USA with my wingman, General Brown, who has been introduced.

I also want to call out that I'm accompanied by Dr. Bill LaPlante, who is our acquisition executive, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition in the United States [Air Force], as well as Ms. Heidi Grant, who is our Deputy Under Secretary for International Affairs in the United States [Air Force].

I have been very, very impressed with everything I've seen here at the Dubai Air Show. Of course, this is one of the world's premiere air shows. During my stay here, I've spent time with our U.S. industry partners, and of course, I've had some very excellent bilateral discussion with our allies and partners who are also here present.

Tomorrow, I will be spending some time with the International Aviation Women's Association, and then from there, I'll be going on to some other locations in the Middle East and Africa to continue bilateral discussions as well as to do my favorite thing of all time, which is to visit with our Airmen.

I want to take a moment and thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates. They have been fantastic hosts for all of us, and I also want to say they are among our most capable partners, and that's the case from a military perspective, both

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in the air and on the ground.

Some discussion points that we have been pursuing over the last several days is, of course, the importance of interoperable operations from a military perspective, the importance of our partnerships generally and being able to both train and operate in a coalition environment, so these topics of conversation have come up over and over again.

Secondly, we have been talking with industry partners about the importance of speeding up our own approvals and considerations within the United States Government when it comes to foreign military sales, while always, of course, safeguarding the most important of our technologies.

Number three, and perhaps most important of all, we have been talking at every stop about the conduct of the fight against ISIL and other terror groups, the importance of keeping the momentum going in this area.

As you all know, we are, of course, part of a coalition of more than 60 nations who have taken this task on together.

We do everything from fly together, we are operating from ally bases in the region, this is a very important contribution, and then there's other forms of contribution in this fight that don't get nearly as much attention as the flying part, and I want to call out again the UAE and the existence of what is called "the Sawab Center," which is a counter messaging center here in the UAE, where Twitter campaigns and other campaigns are being run in order to counter some of the messaging of ISIL.

There are a variety of contributions, and all of these contributions are important.

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It is my assessment that we are making progress in the strategy of degrading and ultimately leading to the destruction, to destroy ISIL, but of course, it is going to take years, and we just have to keep the effort going.

So far, we have collectively pushed ISIL back in terms of the territory that they have occupied. We have hit them in terms of command and control centers, training sites. We have hit equipment storage areas, thousands of fighters have been taken out, including key leaders. We have also been attacking their sources of revenue.

This is all part of the story of degrade. As I said over and over again, we have to keep it going, and as Airmen, we believe in the importance of air power. Air power is extremely important and it can do a lot, but it can't do everything. Ultimately, it cannot occupy territory and very importantly, it cannot govern territory.

This is where we need to have boots on the ground. We do need to have ground forces in this campaign, and ultimately, as you know, we believe that to be the Iraqi Army, the free Syrians. The Kurds have been excellent partners, and we collectively are trying to help train and equip them to do an even better job. Ultimately, this area does require a political solution as well.

This is part of the overall effort, our piece of it being the air power campaign.

With that, I'll stop and open it up to your questions. Yes, ma'am?

QUESTION: I was wondering if you could provide an update on the bomber protest, where are you with that, how long do you expect that to take, and do you expect a delay getting the contract and the actual project?

SECRETARY JAMES: So, protests on the long range strike bomber

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award was made last week, and what is now going to occur is about a 100 day period in which the GAO will be reviewing the contract award. So, we expect that after that 100 days is up, we will proceed accordingly. That is the amount of the delay, you might say, the period of the GAO review.

QUESTION: But if I could just follow up, if the protest is successful, you would have to re-bid the program, so how much of a delay do you expect that this is going to cause, and is this a concern to you.

SECRETARY JAMES: Well, GAO, for example, if they found certain discrepancies could ask that we re-do some of the factors. It would not necessarily be an entirely new contract situation. It really depends on what they say.

I do want to restate something that I've said in the past. We had a very deliberate process. We took our time. It was key that we do it correctly. We believe that we did do it correctly. It's not just our belief. We had independent reviews at different levels within the Department of Defense, to include a legal review.

So, I would like to just stand by and wait to see what the GAO assesses.

QUESTION: Aaron Mehta with Defense News. There have been some claims made to the media about publicly and privately over the last few days from the industry that the FMS process is moving too slowly. It may have actually hurt industry in some cases. That is the message we're getting.

You talked about the need to speed that process up. Have you heard from industry about its concerns? Have you heard from the partner nations in the region about these concerns? Do you have thoughts on how to address them?

SECRETARY JAMES: I have heard from both industry and partner

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nations about the desire that we speed up the process. I certainly take it to heart. This is certainly something that Heidi Grant is working on day in and day out, but it's important to remember that in the United States, it's an interagency process. Of course, we have our part of it in the Air Force, and we pride ourselves on being great advocates within the rest of Government to try to get these things moving, because we, of course, appreciate the importance of these partnerships day in and day out.

It's our piece. It's a part within the greater Department of Defense. We have the State Department. We have the Commerce Department, depending on the type of sale.

So, what I have taken away from the discussions is we need to redouble our efforts and get the message delivered back home that it is important to give much more quick consideration if at all possible, but always guarding our most critical technologies. We can't ever let that go.

QUESTION: Have you heard complaints from the partners here, the GC nations, specifically saying we need this stuff to move faster to keep fighting both in Syria and in Yemen?

SECRETARY JAMES: One of the key areas that our partners have brought to my attention and to the attention of General Brown and to the rest of us is the importance of replenishing our stocks of ammunition and precision guided munitions. That's a key message that I'm going to be taking back to Washington, and it's one that we're working pretty hard on.

QUESTION: Robert Wall with the Wall Street Journal. I have two questions, related questions. One on targeting. With the decision being made in the

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White House to have sent U.S. Special Forces in, do you think that will meaningfully improve your ability to target and hit ISIL forces?

LT GEN BROWN: I think it will add to it. I mean, we have already put an increased focus on the targeting effort, and this will just add to the momentum that is already started. That's been one of my focus areas since I took command about four months ago.

QUESTION: Then just a follow up on your comment about the replenishing. In prior operations, for example, with Libya, we saw that some of our allies ran out pretty quickly of stocks, and you guys had to actually ship some over to help replenish. Are we doing the same thing or will we need to do the same thing for the fight here in the region?

SECRETARY JAMES: We're looking at all of the various strategies. I mean the key thing is to keep the fight going. I think another important point that this has elevated for all of us is the importance of planning out into the future the likely need for munitions, because after all, it does take a certain amount of time to ramp up the industrial base to meet these needs.

If we can plan more so accordingly in the future for these types of operations, that, too, I think is a good lesson learned for all of us.

QUESTION: Andrea Shalal. I just wanted to follow up on the question about the foreign armed sales process. One of the suggestions that has been made is there should be someone at the White House level who coordinates this interagency process, to get out of the silos or can oversee the silos. Is that a recommendation that you would endorse?

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What can be done to quickly get -- some of these processes are just mired, and industry are concerned they are going to lose fairly significant deals to competitors.

SECRETARY JAMES: Well, I'm certainly open to that suggestion. Haven't heard it before, but it makes some good sense to put somebody at a high level of Government that could help to oversee and coordinate. Let me think about that. Let me confer with some of my colleagues. That may well be an idea that we should implement.

On our side, within the United States Air Force, as you know, we have a series of initiatives that we call "bending the cost curve," that are designed in one way, shape, or form to either speed up the process or to reduce our costs, or to increase innovation. It is a three pronged effort.

We took away a couple of ideas and challenges from our industry discussions which would cause us to take a challenge within the Air Force to speed up some of our own processes. My thought process was best to first tackle that piece of it which we have control over while still also being an advocate to the larger pool of Government.

So, we did walk away with a couple of new ideas that we're going to look at, and you have just given me another one, so thank you.

QUESTION: Can I have one quick follow up?

SECRETARY JAMES: Yes.

QUESTION: On the bomber, one of the questions that has come up has to do with the data that was used to cost out the proposals, so it was based on historical

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pricing from previous bomber programs, which you know, are now 20 years old, right, at least.

One of the complaints that we have heard as we are sort of reporting on the bomber protest was that did not properly honor and recognize the work that's been done both in terms of advanced manufacturing, materials, processes.

Can you say anything about that process and how that decision making was made?

SECRETARY JAMES: Well, I can say this, that although history, historical costing data was part of the process, it was more complex than that. It wasn't that and that alone. I'll come back to my earlier comments about we sought a variety of outside peer reviews, meaning outside the Program Office and outside the Air Force, and independent cost estimates, and several of them were a part of the equation.

So, my experience at a time like this is people who really know about these things aren't talking, and the people who are talking are the people who don't really know the full facts,

So, I would like to just come back to the point of we have a process, that GAO is going to be looking at this over the next 100 days, and I'll just conclude with independent cost estimators, particularly when you go to multiple sources, it has been my experience more often than not they do have this pesky thing called data and facts on their side more often than not. We will just have to see where the GAO comes out.

QUESTION: Could I ask both of you, just before the [Inaudible] Air Show in Russia, you announced the F-22 deployment to Europe. Now, we're at the Dubai Air Show, and you have the F-22 flying around. We have the best of the Russian Air Force

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flying within distance of F-22s in Syria. Has that F-22 deployment had the desired deterrent effect, and have you changed the way you use them in proximity to Russian fighters?

SECRETARY JAMES: Do you want to take that one, General Brown?

LT GEN BROWN: It really hasn't changed anything about how we use the F-22. We were using the F-22 in operations here in Iraq and Syria before the Russians showed up. From my perspective, we're going to do what we need to do, and we're going to fly where we need to fly, and execute the mission where we need to execute the mission, regardless of what the Russians are doing.

QUESTION: Hi, from Bloomberg. Can you run down the procedures for minimizing civilian casualties in the coalition, and what types of munitions the U.S. is using?

LT GEN BROWN: Sure. In our targeting process, we have a focused effort to look at the target area before we select the target and then look for, in this case, Daesh or ISIL activity, and the absence of civilian activity. That's the first part of it.

In execution, we continue to watch with some of our full motion video platforms, and we also look at the patterns of activity, so we know at certain times of day, so that is all part of the process.

The next part of the process is the weapons we employ, so using our precision guided munitions and using different types of fusing, we can minimize the impact and have the right effect we want to have on the target, but also minimize any type of blast effect that might impact surrounding civilian facilities.

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We spend a lot of time to fully ensure we minimize any type of civilian casualties, and really the goal is zero, but in a military operation like this, there is the potential and the risk of that, but our goal is to minimize it considerably.

QUESTION: Is there any new technology being used to plan and execute strikes?

LT GEN BROWN: The technology is really some of the stuff that's being displayed here at the Dubai Air Show, guided munitions, full motion video, and building a complete picture before we start.

QUESTION: Are the strikes being expanded to targeting ISIL?

LT GEN BROWN: They are. In some regards, you have to look at it over the course of the past year. The longer we go in this campaign, the more we understand about ISIL and Daesh. As we understand more about how they operate, that presents targeting opportunities, and one of the areas we are focused on at the moment is their revenue and how they gain their revenue. As we take that out, it also has an impact on taking out their fighting vehicles.

QUESTION: [Inaudible] Can I just ask you a question. There are a lot of Russian defense companies here and there is some talk about how Putin's investment in modernizing the military industrial complex is beginning to bear fruit. Are you seeing any of that in Syria, in regard to any recent innovations in their munitions, weapons, et cetera?

LT GEN BROWN: I personally haven't seen really any of those types of advancements. We're using the precision guided munitions. Based on the intel[ligence] I see, I don't think they are.

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Just being honest with you, my focus is on Daesh and ISIL, less so on the Russians. That is why I say it's more a distraction to me than it is anything else. They are in the area. We are going to do what we need to do to get the job done.

QUESTION: Hi. [Inaudible] I just had another follow up question on Yemen. Could you tell us what you're seeing in terms of their operations, what sort of lessons have been learned, and any thoughts on what the parties involved should be doing in terms of planning, munitions?

LT GEN BROWN: Sure. We are tangentially involved with Yemen, so when you talk about lessons learned, I think the fact that we have actually had a chance to operate, train, and work together really over the past 25 years and more so from my perspective in the past four or five years, I've seen with the Saudis, Mahrati's, and the rest of the coalition, they are actually doing pretty good work.

There are some learning's going on, just like we are learning in the operation we're doing in Iraq and Syria. Personally, I've been impressed with the work they have been doing, having had a chance to go visit the Saudi Arabian air operations center. It's obvious we are both on the same path, mindset-wise, from the perspective of how we train and operate together.

QUESTION: Bill Carey, Aviation International News. I wondered, General Brown, could you describe, give more description on the U.S. support of the Saudi led effort in Yemen, and does the U.S. have people at the air operations center in Riyadh?

LT GEN BROWN: Most of our support, it's somewhat small in comparison to the rest of the coalition, but we do provide tanker support that flies out of here, UAE, as well as some intel sharing and some ISAR, and we do have a handful of folks, less

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than 10 folks, that are at the Saudi operations center, and really just to help them with some coordination pieces, not in detailed planning, but some local coordination.

MR. CAREY: Thank you.

QUESTION: Hi. [Inaudible]

SECRETARY JAMES: Well, I'll be visiting with U.S. Airmen in the region, so this will include locations in Kuwait, Qatar, Djibouti, and Africa. Then I'll be having ongoing bilateral discussions in some of these countries. I've mentioned several already but in addition, I'll be visiting Egypt, Morocco, and a couple of others.

QUESTION: Can I ask one for each of you? For General Brown, on this revenue target like you're hitting for ISIL, can you give us more details, is it just all infrastructure, are there other things, and also on the munitions part, there is an actual shortage already or you are just trying to head it off?

Secretary James, I was just wondering what do you think the odds are the protest will be sustained?

LT GEN BROWN: When you talk about the targets set, that is one of the big revenue factors for Daesh or ISIL, so that's where our focus has been on recently. From a munitions standpoint, many of our partners including the United States are employing weapons. It seems like munitions are pretty popular. Not only are we taking some steps to make sure we have the right stocks, we are also looking closely with our partners as we understand more about how they operate and their expenditure rates.

SECRETARY JAMES: Fortunate for me, I'm not a betting woman, so I don't do odds. Let me just say I am confident that we collectively, and again, I mean "we" the Air Force, but we have independent peer reviews as well, that collectively, we

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did a very thorough job and followed the RFP. The evaluation was done according to the RFP, evaluation factors.

So, of course, it is now in the hands of our GAO, and we will just have to wait the 100 days and see what happens next.

QUESTION: Hi, Jen [Inaudible] from Aviation Week. I wanted to follow up on the export control thread, the FMS thread. How is the staffing for DoD in terms of processing those sales? Is that something you need to look at increasing in the future?

SECRETARY JAMES: I don't necessarily think we need more people in the staffing, although Ms. Grant may kill me for that remark because people are working very, very hard, and extra people sometimes do help.

I think it's more of streamlining of our process and procedures we need to look at. Something we certainly did from my industry days, I have a background in industry, if you take on a challenge and if you measure, for example, the number of days that it takes you to review a certain aspect of the process, and if the number of days is 21 days today, you take a challenge, let's see if we can't reduce it to 10 days.

If you can measure it, in all likelihood, you can achieve it, or at least you can do better. So, what I have in mind is for us, the Air Force, to maybe take on some challenges, look at how long it takes us to do various parts of our process, and let's see if we can't get that down.

That's the type of thing I think we can try to challenge other parts of Government to do as well. Those were some of the ideas I took away from this conference.

QUESTION: Tom Neal, Aviation Week. General Brown, can you briefly

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talk about Turkey and what is being done there in terms of NATO support of Turkey?

Can you also give us an idea of the approximate share of what the GCC nations are contributing now to the operation to defeat Daesh and ISIL?

LT GEN BROWN: Okay. For Turkey, the A-10s are there, and those are actually A-10s that made some movements around. With Turkey opening up their access, it gave us an opportunity to move some assets around. We moved A-10s that were previously in Kuwait into Incirlik. We are moving some tankers up to Incirlik as well. We are also able to move some other capability up in the area.

The additional aircraft is a combination of that capability. Some of that capability will support the operations in Iraq and Syria, and we will be working with Turkey in defense of Turkey.

QUESTIONL: [Inaudible]

LT GEN BROWN: Right.

QUESTION [Inaudible]

LT GEN BROWN: That's more of a EUCOM piece of the puzzle. I'm not involved in that part of it. The second part?

QUESTION: GCC nations.

LT GEN BROWN: GCC. The number of GCC nations, as they have had capacity, because they are also operating in Yemen, so what we see is there's a mix of GCC that will participate in Yemen as well as in Iraq and Syria. Less so than March because they have been occupied more so with the Yemen operation.

QUESRTION: [Inaudible]

LT GEN BROWN: I think at some point in time, and we do see some of

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the nations actually participating with us, not as frequently as they were before March, but there's a potential, and it really depends on how the operations in Yemen evolve and whether it's a local solution or how it all plays out.

QUESTION: [Inaudible] -- weaknesses in structures have become more apparent. In terms of the GCC nations, and particularly those ones fighting, where do you feel they seem to focus on extra need? Networking, data sharing. Can you speak to that a little bit?

LT GEN BROWN: I wouldn't necessarily characterize it as weaknesses. Each nation has some level of capability and where they focus their effort, and one of the things the United States Air Force brings is we bring some enablers that some of those nations may or may not be able to afford.

I think the other piece we see is just a comfort level based on experience. Overall, I've been very impressed with the GCC nations, and really every nation in the coalition with what they have been able to provide. I don't really see it as a weakness. It's just the local experience and capability, and we mesh all that together as part of the coalition.

QUESTION: Perhaps I should have said some requirements rather than weaknesses.

LT GEN BROWN: I would also tell you for all this is forecasting what you're going to require. None of us predicted there would be an operation in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen all at the same time. That's kind of hard to forecast. I think that is one of the areas that we will work on with our partners on how we forecast, particularly for munitions, because that's the one piece, I think, that we are all seeing at the

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expenditure rates we all have to work with.

QUESTION: [Inaudible] -- that time has evolved through Afghanistan.

LT GEN BROWN: It has, and I think we have a chance to work together and we understand it much better, and we all have been able to advance, the GCC nations in particular, because of our operations and training.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Chris Church, Stars and Stripes. With tensions in the Middle East, how important are these acquisitions at air shows like this, and how is that going to affect future strategy for the U.S. military in the region?

SECRETARY JAMES: Maybe I can start and then General Brown perhaps can add some comments. I think it is very important, number one, and of course, what we talk about from the United States Air Forces perspective when we are speaking with our partners is the total package approach. So, it's great to acquire the equipment but equally important is to have training, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

You have to have spare parts to go with it, a maintenance program. That's the total package. Equipment alone won't last very long if you don't have that total package approach. I think it's important today. It's going to be ever more important as we go into the future.

LT GEN BROWN: I think the key word for me is interoperability. When our partners buy U.S., it makes it so much easier in contingency operations that we are using the same equipment.

QUESTION: A quick follow up to that. By doing this, is it going to reduce some of the tension that we have on U.S. military, especially in a time of great budget

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constraints?

LT GEN BROWN: Yemen is a perfect example. That is a coalition and we are in support. This is an area where our partners were able, because of the training and cooperation we had over the past number of years, to step up and step in and help us all collectively work together to provide peace and stability in the region.

SECRETARY JAMES: Let's go ahead and take one final question.

QUESTION: Thank you. [Inaudible] CNBC. Can I just take you back to your point on degrading revenues, particularly through oil. Could you just elaborate a bit on how you are doing that. Is that through air strikes or is it through other means?

LT GEN BROWN: Right now, mostly air strikes. That is one of the areas we are doing work on, other opportunities from a revenue standpoint. Like I described earlier, the longer we go into this, the more we understand how they are revenuing their fight, so we can have a greater impact.

SECRETARY JAMES: All right. Thank you so much.

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