

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense**

**Hearing to Review the FY2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Air Force**

**March 13, 2019**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

The Subcommittee will come to order.

This morning, I am pleased to welcome Secretary Wilson and General Goldfein to review the Air Force budget request for fiscal year 2020.

Secretary Wilson, congratulations on being named the sole finalist to become the next President of the University of Texas at El Paso. We appreciate your participation here today and your continued service over the next months to ensure a smooth transition.

The Air Force budget request for fiscal year 2020 of \$165.6 billion is an increase of about \$9.8 billion over the amounts recently enacted. While we are here to focus on this budget request, we are also interested in hearing about how the Air Force is executing fiscal year 2019 funds, which were provided on time.

The National Defense Strategy Commission recently stated that the Air Force will be at the forefront of the next conflict regardless of where it occurs or which adversary it features. I think they are correct in that assessment.

The country expects that the Air Force will invest in a lethal force that will be able to confront our adversaries of the future, and it cannot fail to maintain a ready force today.

This Committee will scrutinize the budget request that we have received to ensure that it supports the more than 21,000 Airmen deployed around the globe at 180 locations, and that it adequately addresses the long-term challenges posed by China and Russia.

We look forward to understanding how your fiscal year 2020 budget request reflects your priorities and initiatives to include the creation of the Space Force, the addition of operational squadrons and what types of aircraft comprise those squadrons, the modernization of our nuclear capabilities, and further development of hypersonic weapons.

Secretary Wilson and General Goldfein, we appreciate your service and look forward to hearing how your budget balances all of these important priorities.

Now I turn to the Vice Chairman, Senator Durbin, for his opening remarks. Thank you.

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