

Statement for the Record

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Langevin, Ranking Member Turner, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) fiscal year (FY) 2011 program and national security space activities. It is an honor for me to appear alongside our mission partners from the Department of Defense (DoD), the Honorable Robert Butler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber and Space Policy; the Honorable Gary Payton, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Space Programs; and General Robert Kehler, Commander, Air Force Space Command. The NRO's close relationship and continuing partnership with our mission partners are vital to maintaining our Nation's superiority in space.

The unclassified nature of today's hearing precludes me from discussing many details of NRO programs, as well as sharing some of our greatest successes. However, I welcome the opportunity to meet in another setting to fully discuss with you the breadth and depth of NRO capabilities, partnerships, and value of the NRO contributions to our national security.

State of the NRO. On behalf of General Bruce Carlson (USAF, Ret.), the Director, NRO (DNRO), I would like to begin with a few words about the state of the NRO today. First and foremost, the unique composition of our workforce is one of our

greatest strengths. As you know, we draw our personnel from across the DoD and Intelligence Community (IC), allowing us unique access to the "best and brightest" from across the space acquisition community and to all the acquisition "lessons learned." The talented people of the NRO allow our significant and continued mission success, and enable our ability to provide the very best information to the warfighter.

From launching the most technically-capable systems, to continued operations of legacy satellites, to business practices, the NRO remains the premier space reconnaissance organization in the world. Like any organization that operates in the unforgiving binary environment of total success versus failure with little middle ground, the NRO continuously strives to improve and learn from both our successes and our setbacks. We have had significant successes in the last year. We plan to extend that record of success through the next twelve months, and through multiple launches. In this regard, the NRO is wholly-focused on continuing our high performance by delivering these upcoming satellites on time and on budget. General Carlson and I are both confident that by continuing to leverage past successes and community workforce strengths, the NRO will continue to provide the Nation with the space reconnaissance capabilities it requires.

DNRO Priorities. Since taking the helm at the NRO last summer, General Carlson has communicated his priorities for the NRO in a very straight-forward manner. It is a priority of the NRO to execute programs on time and on budget. It is a priority of the NRO to improve our research and technology (R&T) investment. And it is a priority of the NRO to continue to invest in the foundation of our organization---to recruit, train, and retain the best people.

And as many of you already know, General Carlson is focused on completing the work required to revise the outdated NRO Charter. Just last month, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and the Secretary of Defense endorsed the *Organizing Principles for the National Reconnaissance Office* and recommended this document serve as the foundation for revising the 1965 NRO Charter. This is a significant step forward in the revision process.

NRO CONTRIBUTIONS: CRITICAL TO THE FIGHT

I would like to briefly discuss a critical mission for the NRO---support to the warfighter. Almost nine years after the attacks of September 11th, NRO systems and people continue to make significant contributions each and every day to ongoing operations around the globe. The NRO currently has over 40 personnel deployed in harm's way in direct support of the

warfighter, and we continue to rapidly adapt to the needs and changing pace of our deployed forces.

For example, in concert with our mission partners, the NRO and its systems recently provided significant support to the 101st Airborne Aviation Brigade during the initial weeks of its redeployment to Afghanistan. Only last month, a helicopter from the Screaming Eagles went down in a remote location near a Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Zabul Province. With no available organic ISR assets due to the FOB's remote location, weather, and other tasking priorities, the Brigade's intelligence staff requested immediate imagery assistance from a combined NRO/National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) cell. We were able to rapidly provide multiple images of the area on a very low bandwidth connection, which enabled the Brigade to quickly assess the situation and secure a new perimeter around the crash site. Key imagery intelligence was provided to the operations and rescue teams within minutes, with the end result being the safe rescue of 14 wounded soldiers and the crash site secured and protected. One of the intelligence officers from the Brigade relayed to our people the following after this mission: "I wanted to pass on my sincere thanks for your support that night. An aircraft down is one of the worst things we can experience as a unit and your timely imagery support was pivotal to our rescue teams."

The NRO also continues to focus on expanding access to NRO products and services, improving the content of the NRO informational products, and reducing the amount of time it takes to get relevant data to the warfighter. Led by the NRO's Mission Support Directorate, the NRO is concentrating on developing new capabilities for warfighters, operators, and intelligence analysts. We are focused on support to Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) efforts, Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (C-UAS) efforts, and communications infrastructure and technology solutions designed to support "find, fix, and finish" operations. A prime example of this is an NRO project known as "RED DOT", which went operational in Iraq last month after it was rapidly developed, tested, and fielded in just over a year. RED DOT leverages reduced processing timelines that the NRO has been aggressively pursuing, and more efficiently moves time-sensitive intelligence data to the warfighter, by semi-automatically passing indications and warnings data from national systems down to tactical vehicles at the unclassified level. This results in increased force protection and serves as a pathfinder for delivering other national systems data down to the soldier in harm's way.

In addition to rapidly developing and deploying capabilities in support of the warfighter, the NRO is also proactively involved with pre-deployment training and education

initiatives throughout DoD and the IC. NRO personnel instruct our system capabilities as part of the core curriculum at the Army's Intelligence Center of Excellence at Fort Huachuca, Arizona; and our Mobile Training Teams have provided both the Army's I Corps and III Corps with relevant training on national intelligence capabilities available to the unit in theater. And of particular note, our School of Warfighter Support, one of the schools within the NRO University structure, recently was awarded the DNI 2009 Excellence in Intelligence Community Education and Training Award.

SPACE INDUSTRIAL BASE

Maintaining a healthy space industrial base is a matter of critical importance to our national security. In the history of the space age we have rarely been so reliant on so few space industry suppliers. Many suppliers are struggling to remain competitive as demand for highly specialized space components dwindles due to a niche government customer-base. We must all do our part to improve this situation for the long-term. The NRO is dedicated to improving the health of the industrial base through well-defined requirements that are coupled with good government oversight and stable budgets and production line rates.

Additionally, as you know, the landscape of the launch capability changed significantly in December 2006 when the United Launch Alliance (ULA) was established. The NRO works with the Air Force to ensure EELV availability and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude my remarks today by highlighting an example of NRO's excellence and teamwork. In November 2009, the NRO received an Unqualified Opinion on the fiscal year 2009 Financial Statement. This was the first clean audit for a defense intelligence agency since 2003. This positive outcome was the result of hard work across the NRO workforce and the culmination of a diligently planned and executed two-year effort to achieve a clean opinion. NRO's internal processes for proper funds management and accurate financial reports have now been validated, and we are effectively positioned to sustain this Unqualified Opinion into the future.

The NRO vision is "vigilance from above" for our Nation. We remain focused on providing innovative overhead intelligence systems for national security, and the people of the NRO embody our core values of integrity and accountability, teamwork built on respect and diversity, and mission excellence. Driven by our extraordinary people, the NRO will continue on the path of

delivering acquisition and operations excellence, as well as the unparalleled innovation that is the hallmark of our history and foundation of our future.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. On behalf of General Carlson, I thank you for your continued support of the NRO, and I stand ready to answer your questions.