**Following a series of incidents, leadership failures and cheating scandals within the nation’s nuclear forces, Secretary of Defense Hagel earlier this year asked me and Gen Larry Welch, USAF (Ret) to co-chair an independent review of those forces and make recommendations regarding the corrective actions that need to be taken.**

The approach General Welch and I took was to review all past reports on this issue, and the responses to those reports, and then meet with Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, and their commanders, at every level at the nuclear forces locations in the U.S. and at three Air Force locations in Europe.

Our methodology was to generate extensive opportunities to listen to those carrying out the deterrent mission and to hear from their commanders as well; they all clearly had a great deal they wanted us to hear.

We then applied the experience and judgment of the review team, a small group of subject matter experts – officer and senior enlisted, active and retired - to synthesize both what we found and what we heard in order to provide specific recommendations to address the issues we found and answer the Secretary’s specific question to us, “What do I need to do?”.

We delivered our report on 1 June. Since that time, we have seen extensive work at multiple levels across the Department of Defense with continuing direct involvement of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense to address the issues we discussed in the report. We are also seeing very welcome and much needed results delivered to the Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in the operating units.

We believe the major issue now is sustaining the engagement that is absolutely required at the most senior levels within DoD to re-establish both the enduring and appropriate level of attention and investment that will ensure the nuclear forces can effectively and safely carry out the deterrent mission, which remains the foundation of our national security policy.

The bottom line in our report is that the forces are meeting the demands of the mission, but with such increasing difficulty that any margin of capability to meet those demands has been consumed and our Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are routinely required to pay an unsustainable price to accomplish the mission.

The troops’ resolute determination to get the job done - doing, in their words, **whatever it takes -** has masked the true cost of mission accomplishment from their senior leadership, who routinely receive reports showing the required number of boats are on deterrent patrol, the ICBMs are on alert, and the bombers are available and ready if needed.

We found three overarching core issues in the nuclear enterprise that led to a wide range of specific issues and specific recommendations:

1. There has developed a leadership ***“Say-Do” Gap*** where the declared importance of the nuclear forces to national security is not matched by leadership attention and support from the Department and Service leadership and from multiple levels down to field commanders. This mis-match has resulted in a range of issues from a perception that the mission and those performing the mission are not truly valued to critical manning shortfalls, deteriorating facilities and deficient logistics support.
2. Over time, an incessant ***Demand for Micro-Perfection*** led to the expectation that there must be zero mistakes in every operational and administrative action. Hence the focus shifted from efficiently and effectively accomplishing the mission to the routine imposition of draconian measures to ensure there could be no mistakes. Said another way, avoiding criticism took precedence over efficient and effective mission accomplishment. This approach led inexorably to a widespread substitution of process and procedure for personal responsibility and accountability.
3. This drive for micro-perfection also led to a culture that valued ***Inspection over Mission*** – that is, the focus of commanders and supervisors shifted from the mission to avoiding criticism from extensive, frequent, and enormously detailed inspections. The consequences to the unit and the commander of any adverse outcome from a large, multi-agency inspection team has been seen as so severe that preparing for inspections eclipses mission focus, at the expense of the Sailors, Airmen, and Marines performing the mission. This attention to avoiding the risks from small mistakes in inspections that do not have safety or mission impacts has actually increased the much larger risk to the effective and safe accomplishment of the mission itself.

Emanating from these three core issues, the review team addressed issues in a dozen activity areas.

As I stated earlier, we are seeing attention to the full set of issues with guidance from the top and execution at multiple levels throughout the various chains-of-command.

It is very important to note that most of the issues identified in our report and in the report of the Internal Review have been identified in past reports – these issues are not new ones. And with each previous review, leadership at the appropriate level initiated actions to correct the deficiencies, but the attention has not been sustained as needed to bring about lasting change.

This time, the senior leaders of the Department and the Services are directly and deeply involved so there is reason to hope that, unlike in the past, there will be the lasting and positive change needed to not only accomplish the nuclear mission, but to do so effectively and safely.

**Activity Areas**

The Cheating Issue

ICBM Combat Crew Duty

Rebuilding a Nuclear Enterprise

Leadership Focus

Personnel

Testing/Inspection

Training

Command Oversight

Investment

The Security Burden

The Personnel Reliability Program

Minot AFB-A Special Case