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(S.D.)- Air Force Decision On Airspace Expected In March



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SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) - An Air Force decision on its plan to more than triple the airspace that can be used in training exercises for Dakotas-based B-1 and B-52 bombers is expected in March.

But Air Force chief of staff Gen. Mark Welsh says the Federal Aviation Administration still will have to release its own decision before the Powder River Training Complex airspace could be expanded.

U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson of South Dakota asked Welsh about the status of the six-year effort during a Senate hearing Wednesday.

The complex centered just northwest of where South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana meet spans about 8,300 square miles.

The Air Force wants to add three "military operation areas" to create airspace of about 27,500 square miles - an area larger than the state of West Virginia.