

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

AFA Members, Civic leaders, and Congressional staffers, a little-noticed piece appeared last week in InsideDefens.com (see link: <http://www.afa.org/GatesApproves.pdf>). First, we don't know how accurate this piece is ... but assuming that it is accurate, I have several concerns about it.

First, most of the time Generals are accused of preparing to fight the last war. Here we have an example of Generals looking out to the future and trying to posture our forces for the future ... at the same time as fighting the present conflict. This is not a case of either-or ... but one where you have to do both ... at the same time. For Secretary Gates to focus on the here and now ... puts our nation at risk in the future. We have seen what the result of this type of strategy has caused in the past - airplanes which are 25 years old on average, airplanes literally falling out of the sky, space systems well past their design life, etc.

Secondly, our history has shown that we ignore the advice of the uniformed military at our own peril. These officers have dedicated their lives to the security of our nation ... **and if every one** of the Joint Chiefs believes a strategy is too risky, we should wake up and pay attention.

Thirdly, militaries don't get built overnight. It takes sustained investment to buy the tools our nation needs to remain secure. The number one reason why Air Forces (and Navies) fail is they refuse to plan ahead. The F15s and F-16s we are using in Afghanistan and Iraq were built with 1960s and 1970s technology in the 1970s and 1980s. We have to look to the future. We can't focus only on the present. I will have some more to say on Why Air Forces Fail next week.

For your consideration.

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