

Note from AFA President -- Industrial Base, Aircraft Costs

AFA Members, Congressional Staffers, Civic Leaders, DOCA Members, one concern I have had, following SECDEF's April decisions to shut-down or truncate seven aircraft production lines, is the continued vibrancy of the aerospace industrial base. As you may recall, the AF depends upon industry to produce the systems they need to defend the nation's interests both at home and abroad. This base has produced the world's best weapon systems – by any measure – and has provided the tools to facilitate the stunning military victories we have enjoyed these past 30+ years. The question for us all is: Can we continue to assume the industrial base will always be there in the future?

Dr. Rebecca Grant, Director of the Mitchell Institute for Airpower Studies, has produced a Mitchell paper which addresses this question. You can find the paper on our website at:

[http://www.afa.org/Mitchell/Reports/MP4\\_Arsenal\\_1009.pdf](http://www.afa.org/Mitchell/Reports/MP4_Arsenal_1009.pdf)

Secondly, several months ago, during a Mitchell Institute presentation on the Hill, a Congressional Staff member asked a simple question: Why do weapon systems cost so much? Dr Grant answered him ... and I added my two cents. However, I think neither of us did a very good job with our answers. Two weeks ago, I drafted a response to share with you ... and sent it to several retired General officers for their comment. One – Gen (Ret) Richard E. Hawley – came back to me ... not with edits, but with his own paper ... which (not surprisingly) was better than mine. You can find a link to Gen Hawley's paper at:

<http://www.afa.org/edop/2009/WhyWeaponsSystemsCostSoMuch.pdf>

For your consideration.

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