Note from AFA President -- State of the Air Force

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

AFA members, Congressional staffers, civic leaders, and DOCA members, it's February and soon President Obama will deliver his State of the Union Speech to the nation. I thought I would take the opportunity to give you some data on the **State of the Air Force**."

First, your AF is strong. Its members are serving all over the world, participating in the many on-going operations, delivering precise intelligence, ordnance, and supplies, fuel, and effects to support joint commanders world-wide, flying satellites, sitting air defense and missile alert. Last year the Air Force flew over 18,000 tanker sorties, 13,000 ISR sorties, 49,000 airlift sorties, 18,000 CAS sorties in Iraq, and 19,000 CAS sorties in Afghanistan. Several airlift records were set – including the largest amount of cargo moved in one day (3.92 million lbs), largest # of passengers moved in a month (119,394), and largest amount of cargo moved in a month (82+ million pounds) [For a more detailed breakout, go our website at this link: http://www.afa.org/edop/2009/2004-08CFACCstats123108.pdf]

Second, your Air Force continues to get older.

Fighter Aircraft: over 20 years old (oldest – F-15 A/B – over 31 years old

Bomber Aircraft: 33 years old (oldest – B-52H – over 47 years old)

Tanker Aircraft: 45 years old (oldest – KC-135E – over 50 years old)

Strategic Lift: 16 years old (oldest – C-5A – over 37 years old)

Tactical Lift: over 24 years old (oldest – C-130E – over 44 years old)

C2 Fleet: 23 years old (oldest – E-4B – over 34 years old)

Manned ISR Fleet: 31 years old (oldest – NC-135W/OC-135B/RC-135S/RC-135W/TC-135W/WC-135W – over 46 years old)

Special Ops Fleet: over 26 years old (oldest – MC-130E – over 43 years old)

CSAR Fleet: over 23 years old (oldest: HC-130P – over 42 years old)

OSA/VIP Fleet: 27 years old (oldest – UH-1N – over 38 years old)

Trainer Fleet: over 25 years old (oldest – AT-38B – over 45 years old)

ICBM Force: over 34 years old

The press has asked me to simplify this and the best way to do so is to look at a chart on fighter procurement. We simply stopped buying airplanes. The one I showed many in the press can be found on our website at this link: http://www.afa.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/IssueBriefs/fighters.pdf

Third -- During FY09 – the Air Force intends to acquire 117 aircraft and retire 188. Of the 117 acquired, many are ISR aircraft: [9 -- MQ-9s, 5 – RQ-4, 38 -- MQ-1, 24 -- RC-12] = 76 of the 117

Fourth, many aircraft are either grounded or have restrictions to their use. In the past 14 months, the AF has had to ground the entire F-15 fleet, the T-38 fleet, the A-10 fleet, and the B-2 fleet.

The following shows key groundings/restrictions:

A-10As – 73 out of 182 are grounded due to wing cracks. All 182 are Service Life Restricted due to Service Life Extension Program. Also as A-10As are converted to A-10Cs, the quantities of A-10A aircraft will decrease

A-10Cs – 58 out of 174 are grounded due to repair of wing cracks. One aircraft is grounded due to a gun malfunctions. As with the A-10A fleet, all 174 aircraft are restricted due to Service Life Extension Program

B-1Bs – All aircraft (66) are restricted due to structural issues in the speed brake area

B-2As – All aircraft (20) are restricted due to windshield bolt hole cracks

B-52Hs – 2 of 79 are grounded – one awaiting input to AMARC (boneyard) and one to Depot. In the past year 7 aircraft were removed from inventory to to input to AMARC (4), retirement to maintenance ground trainers (2) and Safety Board trainer (1)

C-5As – 1 of 59 is grounded due to structural cracks. 4 are restricted for a variety of reasons, and 35 are restricted due to a crown skin restriction

C-5Bs – 4 of 47 are restricted due to a Torque Deck Restriction

C-5Cs – 2 of 2 are restricted for a variety of reasons

C-130Es – 1 of 93 is grounded due to center wing cracking. Further, one is restricted for exceeding center wing service life

C-130H – 5 of 269 are restricted for exceeding center wing service life

EC-130H – 2 of 14 are grounded for Center Wing Box replacement

EC-130J – 3 of 7 are restricted -- HF radio interferes with some cockpit indications on certain freqs

F-15A/B – 32 of 32 are restricted due to vertical stabilizer structural issues

F-15C/D – 2 of 375 are grounded due to longeron cracks. All are restricted due to vertical stabilizer structural issues

F-15E – 219 of 223 are restricted due to vertical stabilizer issues.

F-16 C/D – 7 of 1188 are grounded due to a variety of reasons to include bulkhead cracking and cockpit corrosion. 28 are restricted for wing pylon rib corrosion. 620 aircraft are restricted for additional inspection requirements – fuel

shelf joint, bulkhead vertical tail stabilizer, horizontal stabilizer bearings, wing rib pylons, leading edge flaps, and keel beam.

F-22 – 1 of 127 is restricted due to finger tip formation lights. 2 (test birds) are restricted due to wing structure

HH-60 – 1 of 101 is grounded due to beam tab crack

KC-135E – 20 of 37 are grounded due to engine strut corrosion. Only 5 aircraft are actively flying.

MC-130E – 2 of 14 are grounded for exceeding depot waivers. 1 is restricted (was RDT&E test platform – has no radar)

MQ-1 – 2 of 116 are grounded due to A-Frame cracks.

T-6A – 48 of 354 are grounded due to engine propeller sleeve touchdowns (45) and fuselage skin cracks (3)

T-38C – 10 of 451 are grounded – awaiting TCTO compliance

[Other than gliders, if I did not mention an MDS, then none are grounded or restricted]

Space Forces

DSP – inventory size: classified; design life: 3 yrs/5 yrs; average age – classified

SBIRS HEO – inventory size – 2; design life – classified; average age – classified

SBIRS GEO – inventory size -- 4; design life – 12 yrs; in acquisition

GPS IIA – inventory size – 15; design life -- 7.5 yrs; number of sats past design life – 15; average age – 14.5 yrs

GPS-IIR – inventory size – 12; design life – 7.5 yrs; number of sats past design life – 6; average age – 7 yrs

GPS- IIF – in acquisition

GPS-III – in acquisition

DMSP – inventory size – 5; design life – 4 yrs; number of sats past design life – 3; average age – 7.4 yrs

NPOESS – inventory size – 4; design life – 5 yrs; in acquisition

DSCS – inventory size – 8; design life – 10 yrs; number of sats past design life – 4; average age – 10.6 yrs

WGS – inventory size – 8; design life – 12 yrs; average age – 1.3 yrs

Milstar – inventory size – 5; design life – 10 yrs; number of sats past design life – 2; average age – 9.7 yrs

AEHF -- inventory size – 4; design life – 14 years; in acquisition

Interim Polar System – inventory size – 2; Data classified; to be replaced by EPS

Enhance Polar System – inventory size – 2; In acquisition

Space Surveillance Network – inventory size – 8; design life 15-25 years; number of sats past design life – 7; average age – 31 yrs

Pave Paws – inventory size –2; average age – 30 yrs

BMEWS – inventory size – 3; average age – 15.75 yrs

PARCS – inventory size – 1; age – 32 yrs

Western Launch Facilities – inventory size – 4; design life – 25 yrs, average age – 13 years [SLC-6 (20 yrs); SLC-3E (4 yrs)]

Western Launch Facilities – inventory size – 1; design life – 25 years; average age: Radars – 25 yrs; Telemetry – 35 yrs; Cmd terminate – 30 yrs; optics – 40 yrs

Eastern Launch Facilities – inventory size 4; design life – 25 yrs; Average age – 14 yrs [SLC-37 (8 yrs); SLC-41 (8 yrs); SLC-17 (19 yrs)]

Eastern Launch Range Facilities – inventory size 1; design life 25 years; average age: Radars – 25 yrs; Telemetry – 35 yrs; Cmd Terminate – 30 yrs; optics – 40 yrs

AF Satellite Control Network – 8 tracking stns; 16 antennas; 2 C2 Ctrs; deisng life – 20 yrs; number of units past design life – 17; average age – 23 yrs

Finally, for this nation to continue to enjoy the blessings we have had, the relative security we have enjoyed, and the successes we have had in combat, we have to provide modern tools for our valiant men and women who are serving both stateside and abroad … protecting us. We should never forget that freedom is not free.

For your consideration.

MD

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President/CEO