

Note from AFA President – Budget

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

AFA members, Congressional staffers, civic leaders, and DOCA members, yesterday, Secretary Gates briefed the press corps on his budget proposal for 2010. [You can find his statement at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1341>]

In sum ... for the Air Force, the following was recommended:

- Continued production of ISR systems
- Increased production of the F-35
- Continue the process to select tanker replacement
- Purchase of more SOF lift, mobility, and refueling aircraft

However, the following programs were terminated/delayed:

- F-22 production – terminated
- Follow-on Bomber – terminated ("until we have a better understanding of the need, requirement, and the technology")
- C-17 production – terminated
- Combat Search and Rescue Helicopter –X – terminated
- Transformational Satellite (TSAT) – terminated – and instead purchase of two more AEHF satellites
- Missile Defense – radically cut
 - No increase of ground-based interceptors
 - Airborne Laser (ABL) terminated
 - Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV) – terminated
 - Missile Defense Agency budget reduced by \$1.4B/year

One cut – which has but one line in the release – retires 250 aircraft. This means:

- We will have a defacto Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) – since 250 aircraft is the equivalent of 3.5 wings (and over 5 CVBGs) of fighter aircraft
- F-15s, F-16s, and A-10s will all leave the force ... with no replacements ...

Let me make a few observations about this budget.

1. This budget guarantees that the oldest Air Force in the history of our nation will get even older.
2. B-52s (built in the 1950s) will have to be kept on duty for a minimum of another 15-20 years ...
3. At a time when the nation is spending literally trillions of dollars, we seem to not have enough money to fund an **adequate** defense
4. We are using tomorrow's dollars to solve today's problems.
5. The acquisition decisions recommended will lock in the range of national security options for decades into the future.
6. The decisions are not just programic nuance – but will impact core Air Force functions, to include Air Force ability to deter, to conduct an air campaign, and to rescue our downed Airmen.
7. The launch of an intercontinental missile by North Korea this weekend (and a similar launch by Iran 5 weeks ago) argues for a robust missile defense, not a reduced one – to include the ABL. The technology of ABL has the potential to revolutionize warfare in the future.
8. It is difficult to determine the strategy which this budget supports. This is especially important since a Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is mandated by law ... and will be conducted in the upcoming several months. It seems the budget (and hence the strategy) precedes the QDR.
9. This budget increases risk ... in my view ... beyond so-called "moderate."

AFA believes there are major impacts and consequences ... for the full-up joint team. These budget recommendations may cost us lives and will reduce our strategic options in a very dangerous world.

For your consideration.

Mike

Michael M. Dunn
President/CEO