

Note from AFA President -- Bomber, Spaceflight, START, U-2

AFA Members, Congressional Staffers, Civic Leaders, DOCA Members, several op-eds to bring to your attention.

First, Lt General (Ret) Bob Elder has written a thoughtful piece on the critical need for an advanced manned penetrating bomber. In it, Elder argues the bomber has the range, payload and persistence to hold an array of targets at risk. The present bomber fleet's oldest bombers are not scheduled to "age out" until 2040 which will make some of them almost 80 years old at that time. Further delaying R&D and the fielding of a new system presents too much risk for the nation. I agree with Gen Elder. If you look at a modern air campaign, there are about 15,000 aim points required to meet most political objectives. A robust bomber fleet – one that can penetrate modern air defenses and hit large numbers of targets on a single sortie – is invaluable. You can find the piece on our website at: <http://www.afa.org/EdOp/PDFs/Long-RangeBomberNeed.pdf>

Secondly, as we approach the end of the Space Shuttle program, I continually hear about the many unintended consequences on the industrial base for the cancellation of the shuttle's replacement program – which will result in higher costs for the Air Force and for industry as well as the loss of critical engineers and manufacturing sector jobs. One of our members, who asked to remain unnamed, penned a piece to try to help explain this issue. I commend it to you: [http://www.afa.org/EdOp/2010/edop\\_End\\_of\\_Spaceflight\\_Era.asp](http://www.afa.org/EdOp/2010/edop_End_of_Spaceflight_Era.asp).

Thirdly, Sec Gates has published a thoughtful piece urging ratification of the new START treaty with Russia. In it he maintains the treaty reduces dangerous weapons, preserves critical defense capabilities, maintains strategic stability, and improves security for the American people. The piece can be found on our website at: [http://www.afa.org/edop/2010/START\\_treaty.pdf](http://www.afa.org/edop/2010/START_treaty.pdf)

Finally, I ran across a piece in the NY Times written by Cholene Espinoza, a former U-2 pilot. The piece is a softer one highlighting the many contributions of the Dragon Lady as it heads off soon to retirement. For those of you who have flown the U-2, the piece may bring back old memories. For those of us who admired the aircraft from afar, you should find it interesting. You can find the piece at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/07/opinion/07Espinoza.html>

For your consideration.

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