



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

Legislative Update



KEITH'S CONGRESSIONAL CORNER



“Regardless of where the next conflict occurs or which adversary it features, the Air Force will be at the forefront.”

- National Defense Strategy Commission

Congress has yet to agree on the federal discretionary spending caps for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. If Congress reduces the planned \$750 billion defense budget, the Air Force will lose flying hours, readiness will worsen, and modernization will stall. The Air Force needs 3% real annual growth to maintain its capabilities and requires 5% real annual growth to increase its modernization and improve readiness.

Worse yet, if Congress fails to avert or change the Budget Control Act, the Air Force will lose \$29 billion in expected spending next year due to sequestration.

“Despite nearly 30 continuous years of combat, no enemy in the field has done as much to harm the readiness of the Air Force than the combined impact of artificial spending restrictions, worsened by operating for 10 of the last 11 years under continuing resolutions of varied and unpredictable duration.”

- USAF Posture Statement Fiscal Year 2020

Although there is no agreement yet as to the level of spending, budget mark-ups are coming. The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) marks 4-5 May and 12 May. The House's Defense Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up their legislation the week of May 15th and is expected to mark-up their legislation at a lower level than the president's \$750 billion requested budget. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) marks the week of May 20th.

“Our national-security space program is spread across more than 60 departments and agencies, resulting in a glaring lack of leadership and accountability that undermines our combatant commanders and puts our war-fighters at risk.”

- The Honorable Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States

AFA continues to emphasize that a separate Space Force doesn't make sense at this point in the current contested space environment. Our Air Force is already a space force with highly trained Airman who are fully integrating space, air and cyber offensive and defensive capabilities. In testimony this week, the nominee to lead the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) argued to keep the NRO out of the new Space Force—the new service inside the Air Force. It raises the question why bother? What is it we are trying to fix through a Space Force?

How much is it going to cost? These questions have not been adequately answered yet they are moving forward. A new Space Force, if approved by Congress, is not expected to see sizable increases in funding. This proposal merely creates another stove-piped organization amidst all of the others. It doesn't seek efficiencies or eliminate duplication. It fails to save money or increase our space capability.

"If we had the money, those would be 72 F-35s."
- Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff, US Air Force

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein said the Air Force needs to procure 72 new fighter aircraft each year to lower the average age of fighters from 28 years old to 15. Despite comments from the Pentagon that only 80 aircraft would be purchased over the next five years, Pentagon budgets materials indicate that the Air Force could be forced to purchase at least 144 F-15EX aircraft, and possibly more than 400. The manufacturer of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter contends that their airplane will ultimately be similar in cost but will have more 'bang for the buck' and is survivable against modern threat defenses. The manufacturer of the F-15EX argues that its aircraft can carry more munitions. It is perplexing that our nation will spend billions of dollars on a 1970s era aircraft that will be unable to penetrate many enemies' defenses. That makes it suitable for US coastal defense or for use against a third world country.

AFA's May 2019 edition of Air Force Magazine features a comprehensive infographic that allows readers to determine the best procurement decision for the Air Force: [How the F-35A and the F-15EX compare.](#)

In a positive development, and in response to technology leaps from our near-peer competitors, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Director Steven Walker announced that DOD plans on testing the two hypersonic weapons it's developing later this year or early next year.

"When unavoidable catastrophes strike our facilities, supplemental funding from Congress is our only recourse. If they don't step in, our communities, our readiness, and our security all pay the price."

- The Honorable Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force

AFA has advocated for the prompt passage of the 'Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2019'. Recovery has stopped—Airmen and their families are still waiting for the necessary funding to restore their bases following a series of natural disasters at Tyndall AFB, FL (Category 5 storm) and Offutt AFB, NE (flooding). In the meantime, dozens of military construction efforts will be taken from other Airmen and their families elsewhere in the Air Force in order to fund recovery needs. AFA advocates for immediate passage of the Emergency Supplement. To recover, the two Air Force bases require \$1.2 billion in funding this year and \$3.7 billion in the next two fiscal years.

President Trump will deliver the commencement address at the Air Force Academy's graduation ceremony May 30th, marking the president's first address at Falcon Stadium. The Air Force Thunderbirds will perform the flyover after the graduation ceremony. **AFA congratulates USAFA's Class of 2019** and wishes them all the best as they begin their military careers. AFA thanks them for their service and looks forward to continuing to advocate on their behalf.

AIR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

"We no longer hold the decisive edge we once did, but we are still the leaders. That is why programs like the F-35 and B-21 are so important. They embody the very advantages airmen will need to fight and win in tomorrow's conflicts. It is also why concepts like the F-15EX are so troubling. The notion that a design whose roots extend back 40 years can fight and win against modern threats is ludicrous."

- Gen. T. Michael Moseley (Ret.), former Chief of Staff, US Air Force

It's time to advance America's asymmetric advantage by equipping the Air Force

DefenseNews.com | 26 Apr 2019 | by Gen T. Michael Moseley (Ret.), former CSAF

Success demands smart, realistic preparation. Too often, World War II airmen unnecessarily sacrificed their lives because the nation had failed to invest in and build the air force our nation would need. Today's airmen find themselves facing eerily similar circumstances. With threats on the rise, the Air Force has too few modern aircraft to meet mission objectives and get crews home safe. Never has the Air Force aircraft inventory been so small or so old. The time has come to reset the force...

The [one advantage America still holds](#), especially when it comes to air power, is technology. Attributes like stealth, data gathering and processing, networked collaboration, and precision are unique strengths. We no longer hold the decisive edge we once did, but we are still the leaders. [Read more.](#)

"Always the predator, never the prey."

- Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff, US Air Force

Retired Generals Press Congress to Fund More F-35s, Discourage "Legacy" Buy

AirForceMag.com | 1 May 2019 | by John Tirpak

Congress should boost funding for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and ignore a Pentagon initiative to buy new "legacy" F-15EXs, according to a [letter](#) to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees **from 128 retired general and flag officers**, including four former members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. [Read more.](#)

F-15EX vs. F-35A

AirForceMag.com | May 2019 | by John Tirpak

The F-35 Lightning has been the Air Force's sole new fighter program since 2009, when the F-22 Raptor program was prematurely terminated. While behind schedule, the program has been a top Air Force priority for more than a decade and until recently, was expected to remain USAF's only fighter program until a future capability, still undefined, comes online.

Now the F-35 faces a new challenge from an old jet design, a variant of the F-15 Strike Eagle; an airplane from an earlier era, built for a different mission. Though the Air Force denies it, the two jets are competing for inevitably limited dollars within the service's fighter portfolio. [Read more.](#)

"I believe it's a crisis: air superiority is not an American birthright. It's actually something you have to fight for and maintain."

- Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff, US Air Force

Secretary Wilson, Gen. Goldfein: Air Force must be bigger, more ready and more lethal
FoxNews.com | 25 Apr 2019 | by Secretary of the Air Force Dr. Heather Wilson, Gen. David Goldfein, CSAF

If the past 20 years of war have shown us anything, it's that American airpower is indispensable. In every fight – from counterinsurgency to conventional war and homeland defense – it provides our nation a vital edge.

As we enter a new era defined by the potential for great power conflict, several truths are abundantly clear.

We cannot return to the days of sequestration. Two years of stable budgets have proven again that predictable funding makes our forces better and more lethal. The Air Force has steadily improved its readiness and combat capability while speeding up the way we buy weapons, fix aircraft and develop technology.

These improvements are critical as we contemplate what deterrence looks like against a rising power in China and a resurgent and meddlesome Russia.

Based on rigorous analysis of the current and future threat, the Air Force needs 386 operational squadrons, up from the current 312. The Air Force has been continuously engaged in combat across the globe since 2001 and is simply too small for what the nation asks it to do. [Read more.](#)

Congress must step up for Air Force bases devastated by natural disaster | Opinion
MiamiHerald.com | 30 Apr 2019 | by Secretary of the Air Force Dr. Heather Wilson

In October 2018, Hurricane Michael inflicted \$4.7 billion of damage on Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. It forced the service to evacuate 11,000 personnel and 46 aircraft. In March 2019, a historic flood inundated Offutt Air Force base in Nebraska. It submerged dozens of buildings and much of the flight line under eight feet of water.

Congress is our insurance policy. We need a supplemental appropriation to recover Tyndall and Offutt so that we can avoid cutting projects across the country to manage our losses. [Read more.](#)

"It's not enough to step into the ring and just bob and weave, block and parry, and absorb punches. At some point, we've got to hit back. And adversaries must know we possess this capability. So we'll rapidly develop and field the technology needed to counter adversary systems from any domain at the time, place and manner of our choosing."

- Gen. David Goldfein, Chief of Staff, US Air Force

Opinion | Air Force is leading
ALReporter.com | 26 Apr 2019 | by Glenn Henry

Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson just unveiled the new U.S. Air Force 2030 Science and Technology Strategy. It is an awesome, innovative, well thought out, forward facing, and it is a masterpiece. The 32-page report is a blue print for the next decade and beyond.

Our Air Force leaders again have made us very proud, by stating the strategies that are

aligned with the National Defense Strategy, which calls for building a more lethal, resilient and rapidly and innovating Joint Force. The NDS also requires transformational strategic capabilities that must be driven by scientific and technological advances. [Read more.](#)

It's Official: Trump Shifts All Security Clearance Work to Pentagon

NextGov.com | 24 Apr 2019 | by Aaron Boyd

After [months of speculation](#) and a standing September deadline, President Donald Trump signed an executive order Wednesday officially moving the federal government's background and security clearance investigations to the Defense Department and giving the receiving office a new name. [Read more.](#) [Note: When the Air Force was at a 79,000 clearance backlog, AFA advocated to bring the security clearance process back to the Pentagon]

"I think you have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. You have to do both: Fight today's fight and prepare for the future. ... It's not either-or."

- Gen. Michael T. "Buzz" Moseley, then Chief of Staff, US Air Force

Air Force Launches Electronic Warfare Roadmap: EMS ECCT 2.0

BreakingDefense.com | 24 Apr 2019 | by Colin Clark

The Air Force is looking across the enterprise to build a comprehensive map of all electronic warfare capabilities for the second stage of its landmark service-wide probe of how to bolster the Air Force's EW and cyber warfare capabilities. [Read more.](#)

"There may come a point where we demonstrate some capabilities so that our adversaries understand that they will not be able to deny us the use of space without consequences."

- The Honorable Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force

Air Force leaders on space deterrence: 'At some point, we've got to hit back'

DefenseNews.com | 16 Apr 2019 | by Valerie Insinna

Deterrence was the watchword [among U.S. Air Force leadership](#) during last week's Space Symposium, and officials stated in strong terms that the United States is prepared to enact a show of force to prove its ability to respond to [threats in space](#). [Read more.](#)

QUOTES TO NOTE

"These people have fought, many died for our country, and veterans who are out there need treatment and health care. They deserve it, and they haven't been getting it."

- Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Oklahoma, Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee

"It is essential that our Congress does not sacrifice funds from the F-35 program in favor of new 4th generation, legacy fighter programs with little operational relevance in a near peer conflict. Winning in the modern battlespace requires stealth, advanced sensing capability, coalition interoperability, cyber security and ability to connect in a multi-domain conflict. The F-35 delivers on all these capabilities above and beyond any other fighter in the U.S. inventory or around the globe....It is the most advanced multi-role fighter— delivering unmatched lethality, survivability and connectivity."

- April 30, 2019 [letter](#) from 128 retired general and flag officers to Congress

YOUR AIR FORCE – DID YOU KNOW?

“Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) is the Air Force's center of acquisition excellence for acquiring and developing military space systems. Its portfolio includes the GPS, military satellite communications, defense meteorological satellites, space launch and range systems, satellite control networks, space based infrared systems and space situational awareness capabilities.

As the U.S. enters a new era with the declaration of space as a warfighting domain, SMC is undergoing re-architecting as part of “SMC 2.0” efforts which will manage other significant U.S. acquisition agility initiatives that seek to build new partnerships with industry, allies, and Defense Department partners, in order to drive innovation within the space enterprise and speed the delivery of new capabilities to warfighters.”

- SMC Mission

During the Vietnam War, Air Force rescue crews saved nearly 4,000 Airmen, soldiers, and sailors.

As of February 2019, the Air Force dropped in excess of 70,000 weapons on the terrorist group ISIS.

KEY DATES TO WATCH

2019

May 10-12	Joint Base Andrews Air Show
May 21	AFA Breakfast Series, Capitol Hill Edition, with Lt Gen Scott Rice, Director, Air National Guard, Capitol Hill Club
Sep 16-18	AFA's Air, Space & Cyber Conference, Gaylord National Hotel, National Harbor, MD
Oct 1	FY 2020 Begins

If you have questions, please contact:

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