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HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION, FEDERAL
SERVICES, AND INTERNATION SECURITY
UNITED STATES SENATE

United States Air Force

Presentation

Before the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security

The Cost Effectiveness of Procuring Weapon Systems in Excess of Requirements

Witness Statement of
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Introduction

Chairman Carper, Senator McCain, and distinguished committee members, thank you for the invitation to testify today on our nation's strategic airlift requirements. My testimony today will focus on our strategic airlift requirements as established by the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study 2016 (MCRS-16).

Requirements

I am the director of Strategic Plans, Requirements and Programs for Air Mobility Command. My team works to translate the mission requirements of the joint community and United States Transportation Command into fielded capabilities by programming the funds that underpin our ability to organize, train and equip our superb air mobility forces.

We are faced daily with difficult funding choices, as there are always more requirements than resources, more combat needs than dollars or manpower available.

The release of the MCRS-16 study is a critical tool in navigating into the future by assisting us in making some tough near-term choices. By clearly quantifying valid operational needs, we can more accurately streamline and shift our limited resources to meet other pressing mission requirements.

MCRS-16 determined that our programmed strategic airlift fleet of 223 C-17s and 111 C-5s will provide a capacity of 35.9 million ton-miles per day (MTM/D), which more than covers the highest MCRS-16 airlift demand of 32.7 MTM/D. The excess capacity will allow for retirement of the oldest, least reliable aircraft in the fleet and free up personnel and facilities for newer replacement aircraft and aircraft modifications that will make our fleet more mission effective and economical to operate.

In the FY11 President's Budget, the Air Force makes its first move to eliminate excess strategic airlift fleet capacity by retiring 22 C-5As.

These retirements will provide the necessary manning and resources to permanently bed down 16 C-17s in the Air Reserve Component (ARC) and will save approximately $325 million across the FYDP in depot-level maintenance, flying hours, and modernization costs.

Conversely, if aircraft retirement restrictions direct us to maintain a C-5 fleet in excess of the wartime lift requirement, then additional manpower, infrastructure and resources would be required to bed down and operate the larger fleet of inter-theater aircraft.

Maintaining Mobility Readiness

To ensure the long-term viability of our strategic airlift fleet, we will continue to invest in the necessary upgrades to our C-5 and C-17 airlift aircraft. The C-5 provides a combination of outsize capability, high capacity, and long-range airlift that is unequalled in any other airlift platform.

However, the C-5 aircraft is a complex legacy platform requiring modernization to meet the necessary performance for our modern air traffic environment, abate rising operational and sustainment costs and achieve acceptable levels of reliability and availability.

The C-5 Avionics Modernization Program will provide continued access to worldwide airspace. Furthermore, the C-5 Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program (RERP) is a vital aircraft modernization program. The 52 C-5s currently

programmed for the RERP modification will provide reliable, enhanced strategic airlift at reduced cost.

We are confident the modernized C-5M will achieve our operational and sustainment goals with a required wartime mission capable rate of 75% and will meet the world-wide air traffic performance standards.

The C-17 continues to be the backbone of the Nation's strategic air mobility fleet. It is exceeding expectations every day, under very challenging operations tempo as we support the plus-up in Afghanistan.

As the Nation's core military airlifter, it is truly an aircraft for the times – designed and built for both expeditionary and major contingency operations.

The C-17 provides great depth and breadth to the mobility "playbook" every day because of its mission versatility, responsiveness and enhanced capabilities.

The planned fleet of C-17s, combined with the modernized C-5 fleet provides the nation with sufficient inter-theater airlift to meet our wartime and peacetime needs.

Conclusion

Of utmost importance, the mobility capability of our Nation must remain versatile, flexible, and responsive to protect our national interests and meet the imperatives of the warfighter.

The air mobility fleet faces challenges in the days and years ahead. We continue to provide support to our Joint and coalition partners, while balancing the requirement of being responsible stewards of our taxpayer hard earned dollars.

I am confident Air Mobility Command will remain the keystone of the Department of Defense's ability to rapidly deliver cargo and personnel anywhere in the world.

We greatly appreciate Congress' support of America's air mobility fleet.