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Result 1

U.S. Air Force vows to protect the F-35 program from cuts

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The U.S. Air Force is vowing to protect the costly F-35 fighter program, in spite of major budget pressures placed upon the Pentagon ("US Air Force vows to spare F-35 from budget cuts," Agence France Presse, 19 September 2011). Air Force Secretary Michael Donley told the Air Force Association that loss of the program would [...]

Result 2

USAF Calls For Broad Industry Revamp

<http://fothesky.blogspot.com/2011/10/usaf-calls-for-broad-industry-revamp.html>

In fothesky.blogspot.com with Authority 1

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The U.S. Air Force is looking to the space industry for significant improvements in reducing program complexity, launch costs and development time as it struggles to balance national security space acquisition plans for 2012 through 2016 against a flattening budget.

"We must adapt cultural changes, look at risk sharing and incentivize contractor teams for extra performance," says service acquisition chief David Van Buren. "For that we're focused on acquisition priorities and space is a big player."

In a lineup of 17 key Air Force investment areas by program executive offices for 2012 to 2016, the planned spending on space programs ranks second at \$28.5 billion. Only the planned \$33.6 billion allocated for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter exceeds this. Spending on classified programs and the Air Force's next-generation Long Range Strike bomber comes in third at \$21 billion, followed by Mobility in fourth, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance fifth and the Boeing KC-46A tanker program sixth.

Immediate space acquisition priorities include continuing support of the Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF) communications satellite program, the Space-based Infrared System (Sbirs) missile warning constellation and restructuring procurement of Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles.

The budget request for 2012 includes further support of the planned improvement in space acquisition policy using block-buys, fixed-price contracts and multiyear procurement to lower costs and stabilize the contractor base for the AEHF 5/6 satellites in fiscal 2012 and Sbirs 5/6 in fiscal 2013. Research, test and evaluation includes requested funds for continued development of two Defense Weather Satellite System spacecraft, on-orbit checkout of Sbirs GEO-1, launch of GEO-2 and the launch and checkout of AEHF-2.

Speaking at the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics meeting here, Van Buren says "no doubt there will be pressure to reduce that budget as we go forward in the February time frame."

He adds "there are opportunities for improvement across the space portfolio. Programs are too complex, take too long to develop and launch [and] cost too much."

Against a background of increasing pressure on budgets, all these areas need to be tackled, Van Buren says. "The sustaining base cost is frankly too high, and cycle times are too long. When we have satellites that take longer to test than to build, then we really must look at that," he adds.

Speaking about the restructuring of EELV, Van Buren says "we need to focus on the business processes and cost control so that we do not procure one launcher at one particular time. We also have to invest in a new entrant strategy to enable the competitive environment," he adds, specifically highlighting SpaceX, Orbital Sciences and ATK, all of which are involved in NASA's commercial crew and space station resupply contracts. "We want to clear a new path and make sure any new entrant can be a continuing supplier." A review of the capability to be considered for Air Force work "will depend on experience level, documentation of development and the class of payload." Van

April 4, 2011 – “We’re not the jet set. We don’t need pricey F-35’s – let’s spend defence dollars in a better way”

A column by Peter Worthington published by Sun Media argued the only situation in which Canada would require an F-35 would be if we were “attacked or joined a real war.” Worthington stated: “We don’t need F-35’s to secure our northern frontier from snooping Russian aircrafts. The CF-18s can do that, unless there’s a new policy to shoot down interlopers.” The article also claimed that in terms of cost estimates, actual costs for the jet will probably be 50% higher than those projected.

April 9, 2011 – “Harper shoots down rocketing jet costs, says Canada exempt”

An article by CP reporter Murray Brewster stated PM Stephen Harper stated Canada will be exempt from increased development costs associated with the F-35. “A lot of the developmental costs you’re reading in the United State, the contract we’ve signed shelters us from any increases in those kinds of costs,” said PM Harper. The article noted Canada had signed a memorandum of understanding with Washington last summer signalling its intention to buy 65 of the F-35s, but has not signed a contract for the actual sale.

April 27, 2011 – “F-35s to cost more than \$75M each: DND; Defence Department says true price tag of stealth fighter jets won’t be known until summer, but PM stands by initial figure”

A David Pugliese article on the cost of the F-35 stated DND had “reversed its position” acknowledging the jet will cost more than the \$75 million originally projected. Following a report by the Pentagon outlining various increases affecting the F-35 program, a spokesperson for DND stated: “As an international partner in the Joint Strike Fighter project, we have been advised it forecasts an increase in production costs for the JSF program.” It was noted however, that DND officials maintained any price increases would be covered by contingency funds the department set aside for such an eventuality.

May 28, 2011 – “Delivery of stealth fighter may be delayed; CF-18s could be kept flying longer as U.S. focuses on unexpected cost increases for F-35 jet”

An article by David Pugliese on the delivery schedule of the F-35 claimed the new stealth fighter, originally scheduled for delivery in 2016, could be delayed because of “ongoing problems with the jet’s development in the U.S.” Col Dave Burt, with the next-generation fighter capability project at DND, stated if that happened the CF would continue to fly its CF-18s until the new fighter was ready. President of the Rideau Institute Steve Staples argued: “They changed their story on this jet costing \$75 million each and now they’re changing their story here. The public should have no faith in what the government or military is saying about the F-35.”

May 30, 2011 – “Big bucks, big plane. A Texas-sized factory is pumping out very cool planes, but will they cost too much?”

the helicopter is being delivered two years late. Instead, Pugliese noted, the government concluded a new deal with the company, "resetting the clock" on when the firm would be liable for late penalties, if at all. Steve Staples, president of the Rideau Institute, said the government should hold Sikorsky to the original terms of the contract and hit the firm with the penalties. Also noted, was that PM Harper's office and MND MacKay had earlier brought up the penalties after news reports suggested Sikorsky would not deliver the aircraft on time.

A *Globe and Mail* article in March 2009 revealed documents show the federal government knew earlier than it publicly acknowledged that delivery of the helicopters were years behind schedule. According to the article, Minister MacKay was advised in a January 2008 briefing note that Sikorsky informed DND in the fall of 2007 the helicopter would be 30 months late, while Public Works said it had only learned of the delay in January 2008. The article noted the timing of the Sikorsky announcement, two days after rival helicopter manufacturer AgustaWestland, dropped its lawsuit accusing the government of wrongly awarding the contract to Sikorsky. In April, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported documents it obtained show that financial penalties of \$89 million were set aside by the federal government when Sikorsky failed to meet the delivery schedule for the maritime helicopter. The *Citizen* highlighted the figure is more than double the \$36 million in fines taxpayers had been told could have been levied against the firm. According to Public Works, the contract with Sikorsky has a mechanism to allow for an excusable delay in delivery, one defined as being outside the control of the company. "The government has reviewed and accepted, in part, Sikorsky's claim for excusable delays," said an e-mail issued by the department.

In February 2010, the *Globe and Mail* reported that more than a year after announcing a four-year delay, Sikorsky acknowledged it is facing another setback in the delivery of the first of 28 aircraft. The company says it cannot live up to the schedule that was previously negotiated and is unlikely to offer all of the promised equipment in the first round of deliveries. In June 2010, *CP* reported DND confirmed two-thirds of Canada's fleet of 28 maritime helicopters will not begin delivery until June 2012, almost three and a half years behind the original schedule. "In October 2009, Sikorsky advised the government that it will deliver six interim helicopters starting in November 2010 in advance of the delivery of fully-compliant helicopters in June 2012," stated DND spokesperson Lianne Label. The remaining 22 helicopters will have upgraded engines and begin delivery in 2012. The article noted the department had previously said delivery would start in November 2010 at a rate of one per month, which would have brought 19 of the helicopters to Canadian bases by June 2012. NDP MP Peter Stoffer stated the meaning of the renegotiated contract should have been made clear from the beginning.

In July 2010, another *CP* article reported the government dropped key performance standards for the helicopters due this fall in return for Sikorsky's promise to guarantee another \$80 million in work for Canadian aerospace companies over the next 20 years. According to the article, the company also dropped claims in an arbitration process that could have cost taxpayers up to \$100 million. The revised deal means the first six helicopters will not have a system allowing encrypted tactical information to be exchanged between ships and helicopters. They will also no longer have to pass an endurance test for flying in warmer temperature; and the software needed for some military sensors and weapons system will not be complete by the fall. The same month, the *Globe and Mail* indicated the government blocked \$250 million in payments to Sikorsky to "keep pressure" on the manufacturer, which will only get the money when it meets production milestones. The article noted this development is "the latest in a long list of problems that have plagued" the MHP program.

Engine / Moteur

At the end of October 2008, *CP*'s Michael Tutton indicated a spokesperson for General Electric said the fleet will need additional engine horsepower because they are heavier than originally expected, underlining he does not expect this will add further delays in delivering the helicopter. The article noted

adding the government bases its case on job creation, which would be created regardless of the plane chosen, rather than the superiority of the plane.

Regarding the purchase cost, columnist Peter Worthington was skeptical the purchase price would not increase, arguing: "Cost for new equipment are budgeted low to get approval, and then escalate accordingly... Today, the federal government wants to spend \$16 billion for 65 yet-to-be-produced F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. Watch this estimate start gaining altitude once a contract is signed."

In the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal*, Charles W. Moore explained why Canada needs fifth-generation fighter technology, adding: "Given that Canada will still likely be flying whatever fighters replace the CF-18 in 2040 and beyond, it makes no logical sense to buy an aircraft that will be obsolete before the first one is delivered." Regarding operational requirements, columnist Geoffrey Stevens questioned the government's decision to choose a fighter jet with one engine instead of two. Stevens described the process followed when the CF bought the CF-18, who was chosen because of its two engines. Stevens argued "Ottawa is proposing to abandon the caution and concern for safety that characterized its CF-18 decision 30 years ago," adding Washington is clearly a factor behind the decision. In an opinion piece published in the *Victoria Times Colonist* and the *Hill Times*, Steven Staples, president of the Rideau Institute, argued the purchase of a fleet of F-35 stealth fighters is a "fiscally irresponsible" decision given "record-high military spending, coupled with a record-high federal deficit." He added the purchase can be compared to the words of former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who warned of the political influence of an immense military establishment and large arms industry.

Following the publication of a column by Gen (ret.) Paul Manson and LGen (ret.) Angus Watt debunking 10 myths regarding the F-35 procurement, several letters to the editor were published in reaction. A number of letters noted that while they may be retired from the CF, they are working as "lobbyists for aerospace companies and hence have a personal monetary interest in this project and the more expensive aircraft procure the better." Former ADM(Mat) Alan Williams wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen* that Gen (ret.) Manson and LGen (ret.) Watt would be "well advised to at least acknowledge the following truths...the aircraft is in a developmental state. As such, its capabilities are unproven." Williams added the F-35's acquisition cost is unknown, "nor do we know what its long-term support costs will be... (and) to state that there is no need for a competition because there is no other competitor is nonsensical because no statement of requirements has been made public linking the requirements to the role and mission of the military."

Late this period, a letter from MND MacKay printed in the *National Post* and *Calgary Herald* asserted that the "F-35 is the ideal aircraft for keeping our airmen and women safe." The letter emphasized "up to \$12-billion in unprecedented opportunities for Canadian industry;" the F-35 as the "responsible choice for Canadian taxpayers;" and the "only fighter that will allow us to work hand in glove with our NATO allies."

	Positive	Negative	Balanced
English	23	40	4
Français	0	2	4
Total	23	42	8