

Note from AFA President -- SECDEF speeches, Aircraft Proc, Hero

AFA members, Congressional Staff members, Civic leaders, DOCA members, recently, Sec Gates gave two important speeches – one at West Point and the other at the Air Force Academy. You can find the speeches at: USAFA: <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1543>

USMA: <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1539>

There are two small factual errors in the USAFA speech. See if you can find them. (Hint: One is implied ... and both are on page two).

Secondly, we have laid out part of the 2012 budget for you as it pertains to aircraft procurement. You can find a simple brief at: http://www.afa.org/members/CommTools/slidedeck/budget/DOD_2012_AircraftProcurement.pdf

Overall, the nation is supporting the Army's, Navy's, and Marine's air arms ... as well as the nation's Air Force.

A few observations from the briefing:

- The Department of the Navy aircraft procurement budget is larger than the Department of the Air Force's
- The Navy and Marines – with a total of about 70% of the number of systems as the Air Force – is buying almost twice as many aircraft (227 vs 114). [Recall that the Chief of Staff, General Schwartz, has said the AF needs to buy about 200 aircraft per year in order to make modest reductions in average aircraft age of the fleet.]
- The Army – with about 60% of the number of systems as the Air Force – is buying more than twice as many aircraft (236 vs 114).
- If the aircraft buy rate holds steady over time [which it never does], the Navy is on a replacement rate of about 17.5 years – which is respectable.
- The Army replacement rate is about 15 years, and it, too is respectable.
- The Air Force replacement rate is a little over 49 years -- which means that, except for retiring old systems, the average age will not get younger this fiscal year.

Finally, this note's Portrait in Courage is about [Staff Sergeant Robert Gutierrez](#). SSgt Gutierrez is Special Tactics Combat Controller with a U.S. Army Special Forces Team. I think you'll find -- when you read the piece – you will have a sense of pride in the great service of all those who serve our nation.

For your consideration.

Mike

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