

SEC. 124. NEXT GENERATION BOMBER AIRCRAFT.

(a) Findings- Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Long-range strike is a critical mission in which the United States needs to retain a credible and dominant capability.

(2) Long range, penetrating strike systems provide--

(A) a hedge against being unable to obtain access to forward bases for political reasons;

(B) a capacity to respond quickly to contingencies;

(C) the ability to base outside the reach of emerging adversary anti-access and area-denial capabilities; and

(D) the ability to impose disproportionate defensive costs on prospective adversaries of the United States.

(3) The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review found that there was a requirement for a next generation bomber aircraft and directed the United States Air Force to `develop a new land-based, penetrating long range strike capability to be fielded by 2018'.

(4) On April 6, 2009, Secretary Gates announced that the United States `will not pursue a development program for a follow-on Air Force bomber until we have a better understanding of the need, the requirement and the technology'.

(5) On May 7, 2009, President Barack Obama announced the termination of the next generation bomber aircraft program in the document of the Office of Management and Budget entitled `Terminations, Reductions, and Savings', stating that `there is no urgent need to begin an expensive development program for a new bomber' and that `the future bomber fleet may not be affordable over the next six years'.

(6) The United States will need a new long-range strike capability because the conflicts of the future will likely feature heavily defended airspace, due in large part to the proliferation of relatively inexpensive, but sophisticated and deadly, air defense systems.

(7) General Michael Maples, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, noted during a March 10, 2009, hearing of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on worldwide threats that `Russia, quite frankly, is the developer of most of those [advanced air defense] systems and is exporting those systems both to China and to other countries in the world'.

(8) The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, submitted to Congress on May 6, 2009, states that `[t]he bomber force is valuable particularly for extending deterrence in time of crisis, as their deployment is visible and signals U.S. commitment. Bombers also impose a significant cost burden on potential adversaries in terms of the need to invest in advanced air defenses'.

(9) The commanders of the United States Pacific Command, the United States Strategic Command, and the United States Joint Forces Command have each testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate in support of the capability that the next generation bomber aircraft would provide.

(10) On June 17, 2009, General James Cartwright, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and chair of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, stated during a hearing before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate that 'the nation needs a new bomber'.

(11) Nearly half of the United States bomber aircraft inventory (47 percent) pre-dates the Cuban Missile Crisis.

(12) The only air-breathing strike platforms the United States possesses today with reach and survivability to have a chance of successfully executing missions more than 1,000 nautical miles into enemy territory from the last air-to-air refueling are 16 combat ready B-2 bomber aircraft.

(13) The B-2 bomber aircraft was designed in the 1980s and achieved initial operational capability over a decade ago.

(14) The crash of an operational B-2 bomber aircraft during takeoff at Guam in early 2008 indicates that attrition can and does occur even in peacetime.

(15) The primary mission requirement of the next generation bomber aircraft is the ability to strike targets anywhere on the globe with whatever weapons the contingency requires.

(16) The requisite aerodynamic, structural, and low-observable technologies to develop the next generation bomber aircraft already exist in fifth-generation fighter aircraft.

(b) Policy on Continued Development of Next Generation Bomber Aircraft in Fiscal Year 2010- It is the policy of the United States to support a development program for next generation bomber aircraft technologies.