SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

NOV 12 2013

The Honorable Vicky Hartzler
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hartzler:

Thank you for your September 19, 2013 letter expressing your strong support for the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. Regarding your request for details on future A-10 funding proposals, all information is pre-decisional prior to the release of the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2015. After the Secretary of Defense adjudicates our proposals, and the President presents his budget to Congress, we can provide a comprehensive justification for the budget submission.

The Air Force budgetary planning process is constrained by a number of factors. The limitations of the Budget Control Act and sequestration will result in a significantly smaller Air Force and drive painful choices across personnel, readiness, force structure and investment accounts. We simply cannot escape the operational implications, as well as the profound local effects that result from these budget cuts. Consequently, we are carefully evaluating every available option, including fleet divestment, to ensure that the Air Force can meet its national security responsibilities today while building an Air Force capable of winning in the future.

To do this, we are prioritizing capabilities that the Air Force uniquely provides to the joint force and the Nation, such as global, long range, multi-role platforms which are able to operate in highly contested environments against a determined, well-armed and well-trained adversary. We also must remain ready for the full spectrum of military operations, so the Air Force can answer when the Nation calls. As we seek the trade space to balance readiness and future capabilities, we have determined that only by divesting entire fleets rather than aircraft from multiple fleets will we achieve savings measured in the billions rather than "just" millions of dollars. Therefore, we may have to divest entire fleets in favor of preserving fleets whose multi-role capability meets the dynamic demands of highly contested airspace when measured against the Defense Strategic Guidance. We will need Congress' support for the tough but necessary decisions that will align our future force to strategic requirements.

Thank you for your continued support of the United States Air Force and engagement in our national defense.

Sincerely,

Eric K. Fanning

Eric K. Fanning
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