

any other alternative acquisition strategies the Committee should consider.

Sincerely,

JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, September 25, 2003.

Mr. DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN,
Director, Congressional Budget Office, 402 Ford
House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. HOLTZ-EAKIN: As you know, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on September 4, 2003, to review the Department of Defense's (DOD) proposed lease of 100 KC-767 aerial refueling aircraft. Testimony by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), as well as CBO's work for the Congress on this issue over the past year and a half, was instrumental to the Committee during the hearing.

Subsequent to the hearing, Senator Levin and I asked DOD to analyze the option of leasing up to 25 aircraft, followed by a procurement of the remaining aircraft. We also asked for more detailed pricing information and an assessment of corrosion problems including the cost of addressing those problems for the existing KC-135 fleet of aircraft.

The Department has responded to that letter, and identified several alternative acquisition strategies, with associated estimates of cost and savings. I ask that the CBO review the Department's response, a copy of which is attached. Please provide the Committee with your assessment of the validity of DOD's assumptions and the accuracy of the cost and savings estimates, and identify any other alternative acquisition strategies the Committee should consider.

I ask that the CBO provide the results of this assessment as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, October 2, 2003.

Hon. JOSHUA B. BOLTEN,
Director, Office of Management and Budget,
Washington, DC.

DEAR DIRECTOR BOLTEN: On September 4, 2003, Deputy Director Kaplan testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the proposed Air Force lease of 100 KC-767 tanker aircraft.

After the hearing, we wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense (copy attached) in which we requested three things: (1) an analysis of the option of leasing up to 25 tanker aircraft; followed by a procurement of the remaining 75 aircraft; (2) a thorough assessment of the extent of corrosion problems in the existing KC-135 tanker fleet and the expected cost of addressing those problems over the period before purchased aircraft would become available; and (3) justification and explanation of the Department's decision to pay \$10.3 million per aircraft more than the \$120.7 million per aircraft determined by the Institute for Defense Analysis to be a reasonable purchase price. Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz has responded to our letter, a copy of which is also attached.

Given the importance of this tanker leasing issue, we would appreciate receiving the benefits of your review of Secretary Wolfowitz's response. Specifically, do you concur with the assessments of the advantages and disadvantages of the various funding options that are portrayed in the Deputy Secretary's letter, and do you agree with the stated rationale for paying the price per aircraft as negotiated by the Air Force? We believe that the Committee needs to hear your views on this subject before reaching a deci-

sion on the lease. Accordingly, we ask that you provide this matter prompt attention.

Sincerely,

CARL LEVIN,
Ranking Member.
JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, December 2, 2003.

Hon. PAUL WOLFOVITZ,
Deputy Secretary of Defense,
Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY WOLFOVITZ: I commend the Secretary of Defense and yourself for the prompt actions you have taken regarding the Air Force's tanker aircraft program, in light of recent extraordinary personnel actions taken by the Boeing Company. Your decision to require a "pause" in the execution of any contracts to lease and purchase tanker aircraft is a prudent management step.

Further, I concur in your judgment to task the Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD-IG) to conduct an independent assessment. However, I believe that the DOD-IG assessment should go further than the review described in your letter of December 1, 2003. The DOD-IG inquiry should pursue the trail of evidence wherever it leads, in accordance with standard IG procedures. This inquiry should examine the actions of all members of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Air Force, both military and civilian, top to bottom, who participated in structuring and negotiating the proposed tanker lease contract which was submitted to the Congress in July 2003.

Your recent actions clearly indicate that there are many outstanding questions that must be answered before proceeding with this program. I expect that you will consult further with the Congress as you receive the report of the DOD-IG and that no actions will be taken with respect to the lease and purchase of KC-767 tanker aircraft until the Congress has had an opportunity to review the DOD-IG report. Ultimately, this program, as restructured, must be executed in a manner that is fully consistent with Section 135 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Public Law 108-136).

With kind regards, I am

JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

JOHN MCCAIN,
U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2006.

Dr. ROBERT M. GATES,
President, Texas A&M University,
One Circle Drive, College Station, TX
Re: Tanker Replacement Program

DEAR DR. GATES: Subject to the confirmation of your nomination, perhaps the most important new major defense acquisition program for which you will be responsible, will arise from the replacement of the KC-135 aerial refueling tanker fleet. As you probably know, this program is currently valued at about \$200 billion.

Given the regrettable history of the Air Force's prior attempt to recapitalize the fleet, it is vital that this program obtain the best possible joint aerial refueling capability at the most reasonable price. In my view, this can only be achieved by conducting a competition for replacement aircraft fully, openly and transparently—using objective, verifiable metrics. More to the point, if this very important program is to reach production timely, I respectfully suggest that the final Request for Proposals (RFP) must be unambiguous and uncontroversial. Unfortunately, I am not sure we are yet on that course.

In recent correspondence to Deputy Secretary Gordon England, I conveyed concern

about the unprecedented inclusion of an element related to litigation between the United States and the European Union Trade Commission currently pending before the World Trade Organization (WTO), in the draft Request for Proposals (dRFP). I remain troubled that, without clarity on how answers to this provision will be evaluated, this element (and other similarly troubling provisions, including an overly restrictive invocation of the Berry Amendment and a questionable extension of ITAR regulations) may risk eliminating competition before bids are submitted. I understand that the Department will issue a final RFP on December 15, 2006.

Recent developments in the program underscore my concerns. On Tuesday, November 28, 2006, the Air Force held an Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP) to review tanker requirements and select an acquisition strategy for replacement aircraft. I understand that the ASP selected a strategy that did not include a "capabilities-based acquisition." As such, the approach that the ASP selected appears to deviate from what I understand the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) prescribed. I understand that, in vetting the KC-X Operational Requirements Document (ORD), the JROC called on the Air Force to consider tanker aircraft options that maximize cargo and passenger capacity. But, without a capabilities-based evaluation that objectively and verifiably measures capability beyond thresholds in either the primary mission area (aerial refueling) or other inherently critical missions available from large aircraft platforms (such as airlift), it is difficult to see how the JROC's recommendation can be implemented. As a result, competition may, once again, be eliminated before bids are even submitted.

Against this backdrop, I respectfully suggest that issuing a second dRFP, which can address issues raised by all prospective offerors in their responses to the first dRFP, and conducting a capabilities-based evaluation, which can help assure that the warfighter and the taxpayer obtain the most capable platform at the best possible value, may be useful.

If you are confirmed, I respectfully ask for the following: that you withhold releasing the final RFP until you have provided me with an explanation of how you intend to assure that the competition for tanker aircraft will be conducted fully, openly and transparently—particularly in light of the issues described above.

Sincerely,

JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Air Land Subcommittee.

HONORING DR. OSCAR BISSET

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I join today with Senators MARTINEZ and MENENDEZ, and other colleagues, to highlight the ongoing struggle for freedom being waged by a people oppressed by their own government, and to honor the struggle of one particular individual whose commitment to bringing that freedom has never wavered, even in the face of overwhelming oppression.

Dr. Oscar Elias Bisset is a Cuban physician and human rights activist who has dedicated himself to the struggle to bring democracy, justice and freedom to Cuba.

Dr. Bisset was unjustly sent to prison by a regime scared of the truth that his activities threatened to unveil—the

truth that dissent in Cuba is regularly and brutally repressed; that political prisoners are regularly incarcerated in institutions that deprive them and their fellow inmates of basic life necessities; and most importantly, that the people of Cuba, like all people, long for liberty and the opportunity to take care of their families and loved ones free from repression by their own government.

Dr. Biscet embodies the hopes and dreams of 11 million Cubans; we are here today to honor his efforts and his fellow Cubans' hopes and dreams by introducing this bill, which would award Dr. Biscet a Congressional Gold Medal for his tireless work on behalf of the Cuban people.

It is our desire that this gesture will serve not only as a signal of hope to Dr. Biscet, who—charged with “insulting symbols of the fatherland,” “public disorder” and “instigation to commit crimes”—sits today in the notorious ‘Cuba Si’ prison as a symbol of the Cuban regime’s oppression, but also as a signal to that government and those like it around the world that we are watching, and that liberty ultimately always prevails.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING HENRIETTA BELL WELLS

• Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I wish to pay my respects to one of my constituents, Mrs. Henrietta Bell Wells, who passed away on February 27, 2008.

Mrs. Wells was the last surviving member of the famous debate team from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, whose story is told in the recent film “The Great Debaters.” She was a remarkable woman whose early success in challenging gender and racial barriers was followed by many years of faithful service. She will be missed but certainly not forgotten. Her life is truly an inspiration.

I ask that an obituary that was published in The New York Times yesterday be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows:

[From the New York Times News Service, Mar. 12, 2008]

(By Douglas Martin)

Henrietta Bell Wells, the only woman, the only freshman and the last surviving member of the 1930 Wiley College debate team that participated in the first interracial collegiate debate in the United States, died Feb. 27 in Baytown, Texas. She was 96.

Her friend Edward Cox confirmed the death.

The story of the team, called the Great Debaters in last year’s movie of the same name, began in 1924 at Wiley College, a small liberal arts college in Marshall, Texas, founded a half-century earlier by the Methodist Episcopal Church to educate “newly freed men.”

Melvin B. Tolson arrived at the all-black school that autumn to teach English and other subjects. He also started a debate team.

Tolson, who would win wide distinction as a poet, saw argumentation as a way to cul-

tivate mental alertness. Wiley was soon debating and defeating black colleges two and three times its size.

In 1930, Tolson decided to break new ground. He managed to schedule a debate with the University of Michigan Law School, an all-white school. Wiley won. Other debates with white schools followed, culminating with Wiley’s 1935 victory over the national champion, the University of Southern California.

Tolson’s stunningly successful debate team was portrayed in “The Great Debaters,” directed by Denzel Washington. Describing the cinematic young debaters in The Chicago Sun-Times, the critic Roger Ebert wrote, “They are black, proud, single-minded, focused, and they express all this most dramatically in their debating.”

In the fall of 1930, Henrietta Bell, who would later marry Wallace Wells, was a freshman in an English class taught by Tolson. The professor urged her to try out for the debate team, because she seemed to be able to think on her feet. She was the first woman on the team.

In an interview with The Houston Chronicle in 2007, she said the boys “didn’t seem to mind me.”

But the work was far from easy. Bell attended classes during the day, had three campus jobs and practiced debating at night. The intensity of debating was reflected in Tolson’s characterization of it as “a blood sport.”

But the hard work paid off. In the interview with The Chronicle, Wells declared, “We weren’t intimidated.”

Henrietta Pauline Bell was born on the banks of Buffalo Bayou in Houston on Jan. 11, 1912, and raised by a hard-pressed single mother from the West Indies. When riots broke out in 1917 over police treatment of black soldiers at a World War I training camp, the family’s house was searched. Wells recalled being unable to try on clothes in segregated stores.

She did not debate in high school but was valedictorian of her class. She earned a modest scholarship from the YMCA to go to Wiley, Episcopal Life reported.

In the spring of 1930, Bell, her teammates and her chaperone arrived at the Seventh Street Theater in Chicago. It was the largest black-owned theater in town, because no large white-owned facility would host a racially mixed audience, according to an article in The Marshall News-Messenger. Wells remembered a standing-room-only crowd.

She wore a dark suit and had her hair cut in a boyish bob. In an interview with Jeffrey Porro, one of the screenwriters of “The Great Debaters,” she felt very small on that very big stage. “I had to use my common sense,” she said.

She remembered Tolson urging her to punch up her delivery. “You’ve got to put something in there to wake the people up,” he had said.

Wells told The Chronicle, “It was a non-decision debate, but we felt at the time that it was a giant step toward desegregation.”

She debated for only one year, because of the need to work for money. She kept up with drama, which Tolson also coached. After graduating from college, she returned to Houston, where she met Wallace Wells and married. He was a church organist and later an Episcopal minister. She worked as a teacher and social worker.

Wells advised Washington on the movie, using her scrapbooks as visual aids. She urged him to play Tolson, something he at first was not inclined to do. He called her “another grandma.”

Wallace Wells died in 1987. Wells left no immediate survivors.

Her advice to today’s students was straightforward: “Learn to speak well and learn to express yourself effectively.”

She learned this lesson directly from Tolson, whom she called her crabbiest and best teacher. He was known for issuing intellectual challenges immediately upon entering the classroom.

A typical salutation: “Bell! What is a verb?”•

TRIBUTE TO THE DRAKE UNIVERSITY MEN’S BASKETBALL TEAM

• Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here today to commend the Drake University Men’s Basketball team on its outstanding and unexpected success this past season. Drake is a school of less than 5,000 students in Des Moines, IA. Today the Drake community is experiencing basketball success the likes of which it hasn’t seen in over 35 years. Coached by Keno Davis, the Bulldogs won the regular season Missouri Valley Conference, the Missouri Valley Conference tournament and earned a berth to the NCAA tournament. They were picked to finish ninth in the conference and instead roared to a 28-4 overall record. It was only the second winning season the Bulldogs have enjoyed in the past 20 years. And it’s the first time since 1971 that they will play in the NCAA tournament. Drake also finished the regular season ranked 20th in the Nation and beating a tough Illinois State team by 30 points in the MVC tournament final. It’s been a long drought, but the Bulldog nation, from Iowa to Washington, DC, to California, could not be prouder.

This upstart team has quite a story. Two starters, Adam Emmenecker and Jonathon Cox are former 3-year walk-ons who recently earned basketball scholarships. They are also incredibly successful academically. Drake started off the season well and won the mythical State championship by beating the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa. They snapped a 20 game losing streak at the University of Iowa. Drake also had great success in Missouri Valley Conference play. The Bulldogs cracked the Top 25, too, and traveled to Butler University and beat the eighth ranked team on their home court.

This Drake team exemplifies what it means to be a student-athlete. Five Drake players, Adam Emmenecker, Josh Young, Klayton Korver, Brent Heemskerck, and Jonathon Cox were named to the MVC’s scholar-athlete team. Four of the five Bulldog starters have a GPA above 3.0. In addition, Emmenecker was named the ESPN Scholar Athlete of the year for NCAA Men’s Division I basketball, with a 3.97 GPA and four majors.

It goes without saying that behind a great college team are great coaches and administrators. Keno Davis is in his first year as a head coach. He’s been named the Missouri Valley Conference Coach of the Year, and Sporting News Coach of the Year. Just 36 years old, Keno learned from his father, Dr. Tom Davis, who retired as Drake’s head coach in 2007, and was a longtime head coach at the University