

Transcript for clip from HASC hearing: Planning for Sequestration in Fiscal Year 2014 and Perspectives of the Military Services on the Strategic Choices and Management Review (September 18, 2013)

CHAIRMAN MCKEON: Thank you. Mr. Garamendi.

CONGRESSMAN GARAMENDI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. and gentlemen, thank you very much for your service and the tough situations you face.

General Welsh, I think you're aware I am going to ask about the KC-10. It's been quoted in the newspaper that a decision is in process to eliminate the entire fleet of the KC-10's, obviously a major impact, particularly on Travis Air Force base, which houses half that fleet, at a time when we are going to reposition ourselves to the Pacific. Can you explain in detail, and I guess as briefly as possible, why you are suggesting the elimination of the KC-10's? At this time I understand it is for the 2015 budget proposal.

GENERAL WELSH: Yes, sir. First of all, anything that was in the paper is not a decision yet. We are considering the vestiture of the KC-10 fleet along with the vestiture of lots of other things. One of the things we got to as we looked at the alt POM, the sequestered POM, especially for '15 is that 1 trillion plus out of the Department of Defense is going to leave a bruise. It's going to be significant and it's going to impact many, many things across the Air Force.

We looked at the refueling fleet, we looked at our permissive ISR fleet, we looked at everything we do in the MILCON facility sustainment arena. We still haven't been able to get at facilities and infrastructure or personnel costs, which are significant to us, and so we're back to modernization and readiness. Those are our choices.

And so as we looked at modernization/recapitalization, we looked at fleets of airplanes to see where you could save big amounts of money as opposed to a whole bunch of little amounts of money that don't make a savings over time.

CONGRESSMAN GARAMENDI: So you're suggesting...

GENERAL WELSH: That's where the KC-10 fleet was examined, as part of that effort.

CONGRESSMAN GARAMENDI: Rather than the KC-135s, which are older?

GENERAL WELSH: Sir, you can't eliminate the KC-135 fleet and still do the job that we do for the Department of Defense worldwide. It's too large. There's nothing good about divesting

any aircraft fleet right now. What we're looking at right now is, where can we take savings and not completely stop our ability to do our job.

CONGRESSMAN GARAMENDI: We have very little time here and I will not go further at this moment but I'm definitely going to go into this in far more detail with you and your staff.

GENERAL WELSH: Yes, sir.

CONGRESSMAN GARAMENDI: I look forward to that.

GENERAL WELSH: I'd expect you to do that and I look forward to the conversation.

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