

GAO

Briefing Report Congressional Requesters

September 1992

# 1993 AIR FORCE BUDGET

## Potential Reductions to Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Programs



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**National Security and  
International Affairs Division**

B-250126

September 25, 1992

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable John P. Murtha  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
House of Representatives

As requested, we reviewed the Air Force's fiscal year 1993 Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) budget request and prior years RDT&E appropriations for the F-22, F-15, and F-16 fighter programs.

We identified \$47.2 million in potential reductions to the fiscal year 1993 budget request and \$2.1 million in potential rescissions of fiscal year 1992 funds.

**Table 1: Potential Reductions and Rescissions in Air Force RDT&E Programs**

Program	Fiscal year		Total
	1993	1992	
F-22 Fighter	\$21.0	\$0.0	\$21.0
F-15 Fighter	0.0	2.1	2.1
F-16 Fighter	26.2	0.0	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$47.2</b>	<b>\$2.1</b>	<b>\$49.3</b>

This report was prepared to assist House and Senate Conferees during their consideration of the fiscal year 1993 Defense Appropriation Act. On August 14, 1992, we provided your staff the results of our evaluations. The final results of the evaluations are summarized in this report.

Additional information on our review is presented in appendix I.

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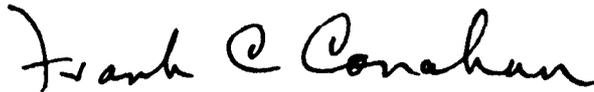
## Scope and Methodology

We interviewed budget and program officials and reviewed pertinent program documents and budget support data at the Aeronautical Systems Center of the Air Force Material Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, formerly the Aeronautical Systems Division and Air Force Systems Command, respectively. We performed our work from May 1992 to August 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As requested, we did not obtain official written agency comments on this report. However, we discussed its contents with officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Air Force and have included their comments where appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to appropriate congressional committees; the Secretaries of Defense and the Air Force; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and other interested parties.

This report was prepared under the direction of Nancy Kingsbury, Director, Air Force Issues, who may be reached at (202) 275-4268, if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix II.



Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General



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## Abbreviations

RDT&E	Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation
TEWS	Tactical Electronic Warfare System



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# Potential Reductions and Rescissions to Air Force RDT&E Programs

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We identified \$47.2 million in potential reductions to the Air Force's Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) budget request for fiscal year 1993 and \$2.1 million in potential rescissions from appropriated funds for fiscal year 1992. These reductions and rescissions are discussed below by program.

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## F-22 Fighter

The Air Force is developing the next generation air superiority fighter, the F-22, to replace F-15 fighter aircraft. The Air Force is planning for the F-22 to enter the inventory in the early 2000s, and it is designed to penetrate enemy airspace and achieve a first look, first kill capability against multiple targets.

In 1986, the Air Force awarded contracts to two teams to develop prototype aircraft for the next generation air superiority fighter. After competition between the prototypes, the F-22, which was developed by the team of Lockheed, General Dynamics, and Boeing, was selected. It is to combine technologies for low observability, high maneuverability, and advanced avionics.

The program is currently in the engineering and manufacturing development phase of the acquisition cycle. In this phase, the primary tasks are to design, fabricate, and test 11 flight test vehicles and prepare for production. The Air Force had requested \$2.2 billion for development of the F-22 in fiscal year 1993.

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## Results of Analysis

The Air Force request for fiscal year 1993 for the F-22 included \$21.0 million to conduct tests on the prototype aircraft. The Air Force believed flight testing of the prototype beyond the demonstration and validation phase would provide useful aerodynamic information for the engineering and manufacturing development phase of the program.

In April 1992, the F-22 prototype crashed during flight testing at Edwards Air Force Base, California. While the airframe was not destroyed, program officials have no plans to repair it and have canceled plans for further flight testing of the prototype.

The committee could consider reducing the Air Force's request for fiscal year 1993 development funding by \$21.0 million because the request was based, in part, on the continuation of F-22 prototype tests that are no longer planned. Air Force officials stated that these funds should not be

reduced because they expect a shortfall in funding planned F-22 development effort for fiscal year 1993. They also noted that a reduction of \$200 million in F-22 funding for fiscal year 1993 has already been proposed by a Congressional committee, which far exceeds the \$21.0 million potential reduction discussed in this report.

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## **F-15 Fighter**

The F-15s are twin engine, swept-wing aircraft, designed for high maneuverability in air-to-air combat. They are equipped with a mix of medium- and short-range missiles and a 20mm cannon. The latest F-15 is an all weather/night ground attack aircraft that retains its full air-to-air combat capability. The first aircraft were delivered in the mid 1970s and the last three aircraft, acquired in fiscal year 1992, are to be delivered to the Air Force by late 1994.

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## **Results of Analysis**

Test support for the F-15 Tactical Electronic Warfare System (TEWS) in fiscal year 1992 was to be acquired using RDT&E funds appropriated under the TEWS program element. However, the test support was acquired with funds appropriated for another F-15 modification program that had been canceled. As a result, F-15 program officials determined in June, 1992, that \$2.1 million appropriated in fiscal year 1992 for F-15 TEWS testing was excess. We suggested the Committees consider rescission of \$2.1 million.

Air Force officials advised us in September 1992 that unexpected requirements had arisen, including recognition that they had substantially underestimated the cost of conducting F-15 TEWS tests at the Western test ranges. For example, they said they initially expected the costs to be \$40,000 per flight, but found in August 1992 that actual costs will be \$100,000 per flight for 23 flights planned at the Western test ranges. After reestimating the program costs to consider the underestimated test costs and some additional funding requirements that had not been known before, they indicated that only \$11,000 is excess to their needs. We did not verify the Air Force's reestimate.

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## **F-16 Fighter**

The F-16 fighter aircraft is a single engine, lightweight, high performance aircraft that is capable of delivering both air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons in performing a broad range of tactical air warfare missions. The F-16 is operated by air forces of 17 nations, including the 4 European countries that participated in the initial production. The first aircraft were

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delivered in 1978 and the last 24 aircraft acquired in fiscal year 1993 are to be delivered to the Air Force by late 1994.

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### **F-16 Night Attack Program**

Under the program element titled the Night Attack Program, the Air Force is developing a night vision system to provide older (known as Block "30") F-16 aircraft with a night, under-the-weather, close air support capability. The program includes retrofit of 300 older F-16s, and acquisition of new equipment consisting of head-steered, forward looking infrared and helmet-mounted display devices. Delivery and installation are planned to begin in fiscal year 1997 and to be completed about fiscal year 2000. The fiscal year 1993 budget request includes \$26.2 million for RDT&E.

In February 1991, the Air Force directed that no contract be awarded for further development of the night capability. In February 1992, the Tactical Air Command, now merged into the Air Combat Command, stated its intent to cancel the Night Attack Program. Accordingly, the F-16 System Program Office has suspended further action on development of the Night Attack Program.

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### **Results of Analysis**

The Air Force has requested \$26.2 million in fiscal year 1993 development funds for the F-16 Night Attack Program; however, Air Force officials told us the program is not active and may be canceled. Officials of the Office of the Secretary of Defense told us the Night Attack Program has not been canceled at this time, and its continuance hinges on resolution of several other issues, such as whether the Multi Role Fighter program is continued, whether the F-16 production line is closed, and which aircraft is to be the Air Force's future close air support aircraft. Since the Night Attack Program is deferred by the Air Force at this time, the requested amount is potentially excess to F-16 requirements in fiscal year 1993.

F-16 System Program Office officials contended that even if the Night Attack Program is canceled, \$10.4 million of the requested funds could be used to develop enhancements that are similar to those intended under the Night Attack Program, such as night vision goggles and a laser spot tracker, for newer Block 40 F-16 Close Air Support (CAS) aircraft.

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# Major Contributors to This Report

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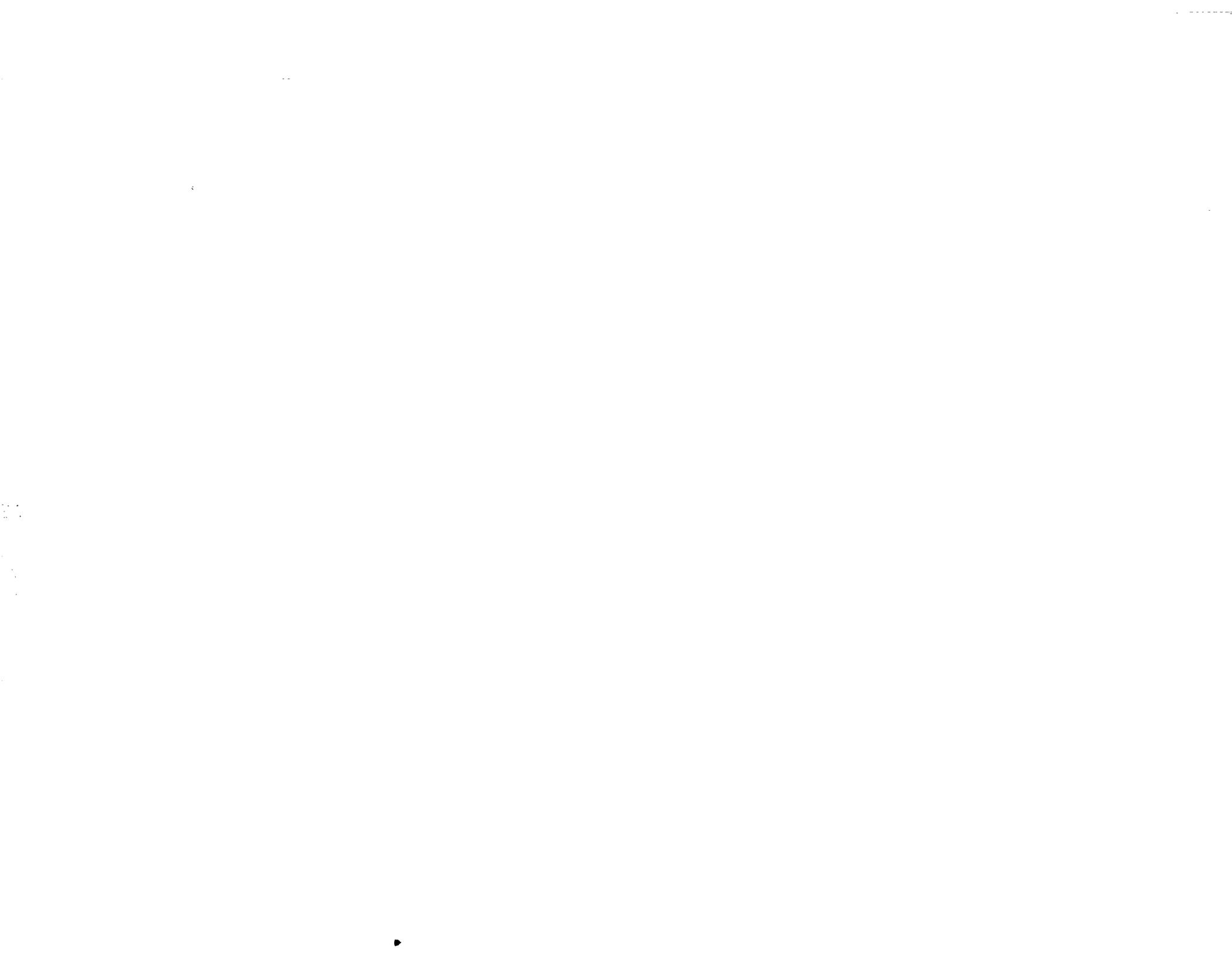
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