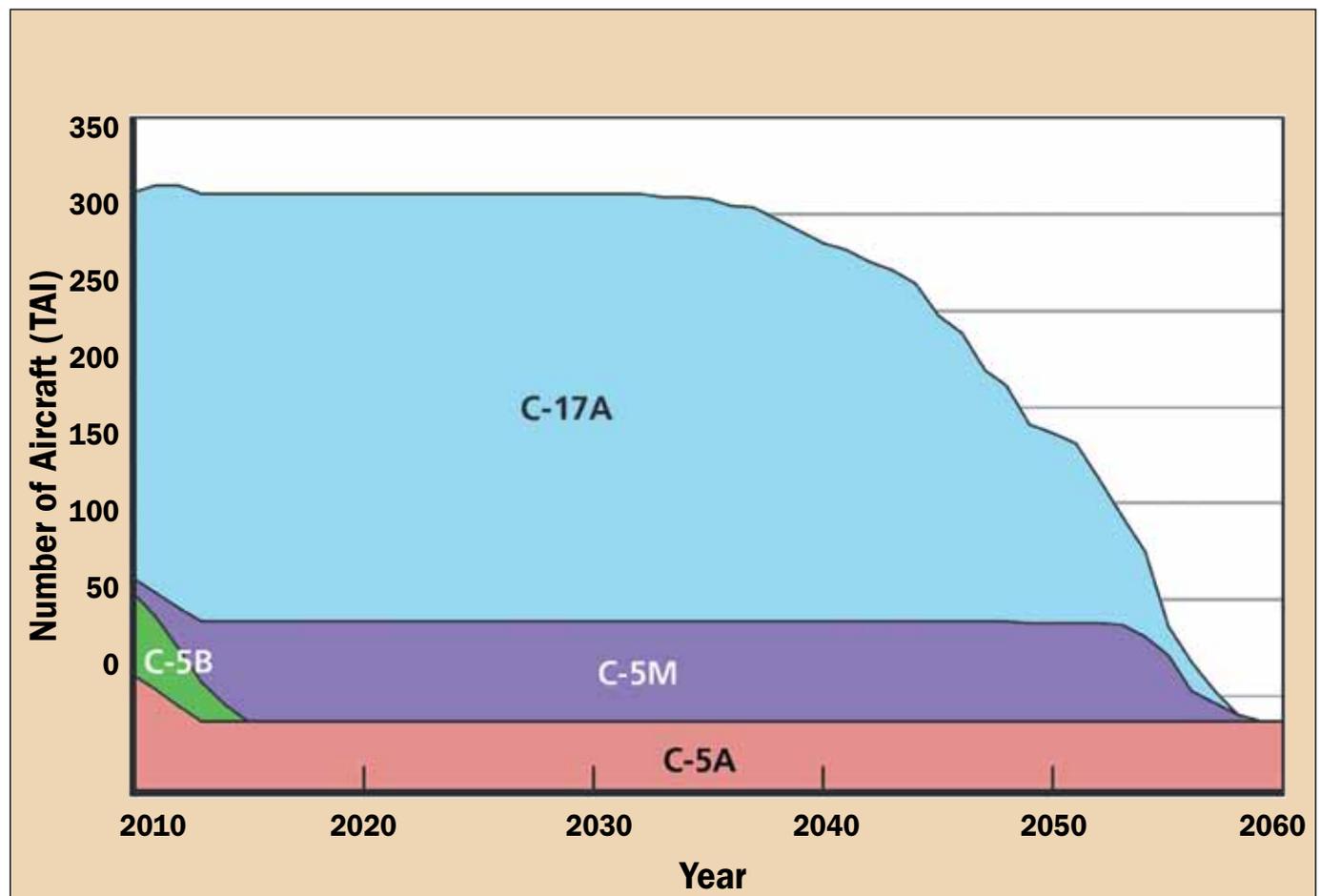


The Airlift Cliff

USAF's strategic airlift fleet consists of C-5 and C-17 types. USAF ceased producing new C-5s years ago. The C-17 line is open, but USAF does not plan to buy more than the 224 it already has ordered. RAND recently projected annual strategic airlifter retirements, based on structural fatigue. The projection, seen here, shows that numbers fall off a cliff after 2030. C-17As

are the first to go. Though newer than the C-5, the C-17 has been ridden hard. In the mid-2050s, C-5Ms will start to retire. (C-5As, because they are little used, will be around longer.) RAND reports that, given the drawdown realities, USAF must recapitalize. The question is: Where will the money come from?

Projected Retirement Schedule



Source: "Reducing Long-Term Costs While Preserving a Robust Strategic Airlift Fleet: Options for the Current Fleet and Next Generation Aircraft," Christopher A. Mouton, David T. Orietsky, Michael Kennedy, and Fred Timson. Project Air Force. RAND Corp., Santa Monica, Calif. Jan. 31, 2013. Reprinted with permission.

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