

Excerpt of News Briefing with Defense Secretary Robert Gates at the Pentagon on the KC-X Tanker Program, March 18, 2009

Q Can I ask a follow -- on a different subject, the tanker . . .

SEC. GATES: Good question.

Q . . . the tanker, that came up again last week. It's the long- running story. Congressman Murtha and Congressman Abercrombie both advocate a split versus a winner-take-all. Are you still opposed to a split? And if so, why?

SEC. GATES: I am. I think it's bad public policy and I think it's bad acquisition policy. It would require the Air Force to maintain two different logistics -- two different logistics trains, two different kinds of training. Everything would have to be duplicated in the support structure, and I see no -- I just think it's a bad deal for taxpayers.

Q Do you have any sense of how much it would cost, roughly, given that the two plans are fairly well known?

SEC. GATES: No, I don't.

Q One of the—have you gotten any direction from the White House to delay the tanker purchase, the contest by as many five years --

SEC. GATES: No.

Q . . . as some news stories suggested?

SEC. GATES: No.