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IN THE NEWS

Will the Air Force Really Buy a New Light Attack Aircraft?

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Among those who believe the Air Force is sincere in its desire to purchase an OA-X is Mark Gunzinger, a former B-52 pilot and air power analyst at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. “Yes, I think they are serious,” Gunzinger told *The National Interest*. “It makes sense for the missions they would use it for as well as from a cost and force management perspective. There also appears to be significant support on the Hill, but a never-ending series of CRs [continuing resolutions] could disrupt its timing.... As well as other programs, for that matter.”

An aircraft like the OA-X could take the strain off fighters such as the A-10, F-16, F-15E and F-22, which have been pressed into service against insurgents in the Middle East. “It could help reduce the tempo for some capabilities in some operations,” Gunzinger said. “Light attack in support of CT [counter-terrorism] missions, for example, in permissive environments.”