



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

IN THE NEWS

Air Force's new stealth bomber will replace B-1s and B-2s while older B-52s keep flying

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The U.S. Air Force plans to phase out its B-1B and B-2 bomber fleets as the new B-21 bomber, currently being built in Palmdale by Northrop Grumman Corp., becomes operational in the mid-2020s.

Mark Gunzinger, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said the move to phase out the B-1Bs and B-2s is likely budget-driven. The Air Force needs to modernize and reinvest in a number of its key assets, including its fighter jets, bomber forces and unmanned systems, and that is a "daunting challenge."

But he said the phase-out would exacerbate an already-existing shortage in long-range strike capability.

"Premature retirement of viable long-range strike weapons is just going to make that problem worse," Gunzinger said. "I would keep the B-2s as long as they have useful operational lives. I would try to get every year I can out of them."