

Subscribe • Register • Newsletters • Sign In

Q

Search our site

🕎 News 🗸 Airlines 🗸 Defence 🗸 Flight International 🗸 Events & webinars 🗸 Jobs 🗸 Subscribe Airline Business 🗸

TRENDING NOW • Guide to Business Aviation Training and Safety 2024 • Airline Business podcast • First Flight - a new podcast • AIX 2024 • Women in Aviation • Sustainabl

E

Fixed-Wing<sup>¬</sup>

# USAF seeks \$329m for single 737 VIP transport amid cuts to fighter procurement

By Jan Tegler | 22 May 2024

f 🔉 in 🖂

Inconspicuous among the volumes of the US Air Force's (USAF's) fiscal year 2025 budget request is a line item for "C-40 fleet expansion", describing the modification of a single industry-standard business aircraft with features including the secure communications suite already present on eight of the service's executive transport aircraft.

Costing nearly \$329 million, the Boeing 737-based C-40D will be the newest aircraft dedicated to supporting the "top five users" – the USA's vice-president, first spouse, secretary of state, secretary of defense and chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, according to the air force.

It will join a fleet of four 737-based C-40Bs and four 757-derived C-32As equipped with the Senior Leader Communications System-Airborne suites currently used for the mission.



Source: US Air Force The USAF operates 11 737-based C-40s, including four C-40Bs it uses primarily to transport the vice-president, first spouse, secretary of state, secretary of defense and chairman of the joint chiefs of staff

The USAF says it will acquire the jet to address a shortfall in airlift capacity for those individuals.

"While C-40B aircraft can be used as back ups for top-five missions, these aircraft also serve other primary customers, including combatant commanders," the USAF says, adding that its C-32As "primarily support the top-five customers".

Operating that fleet of "four aircraft to support five customers every day, in addition to meeting

depot maintenance and modification installation schedules, plus additional surge requirements, means that there are missions a C-32A aircraft won't be able to fulfill", the USAF says.

The C-32A is the militarised, executive transport version of the 757-200. The four now in service were acquired beginning in 1998. The C-40 is the US military's version of the 737-based Boeing Business Jet (BBJ). The USAF has 11 C-40s, which began entering service in late 2002. That fleet comprises the four C-40Bs and seven C-40Cs, which lack the communications suites and are used to transport members of the president's cabinet and Congress. The USAF puts the C-40's unit cost at \$70 million.

The service says requirements for the new-build C-40D executive airlift procurement "are still being coordinated and finalised". It is possible the jets will be based on Boeing's new 737 Max 7 or Max 8. That programme has been under intense scrutiny due to nagging safety and quality concerns – issues that prompted Boeing this year to significantly slow production, resulting in ongoing and lengthy delivery delays.

According to Cirium's Values Analyzer, new Max 8 BBJs with standard executive cabins are worth \$111-124 million, meaning the C-40D will be roughly three times more expensive.

The USAF is seeking to acquire the single C-40D at the same time it wants to trim acquisition of combat aircraft due to fiscal constraints. The service aims to acquire 42 Lockheed Martin F-35As an 18 Boeing F-15EX in FY2025, six fewer of each than previously planned, according to the budget request.



Source: US Air Force The USAF also operates four C-32s, which are militarised 757-based executive transports

That reduction comes even as the US military insists it must be better prepared for threats in the Asia-Pacific region, where China is rapidly expanding its military capabilities.

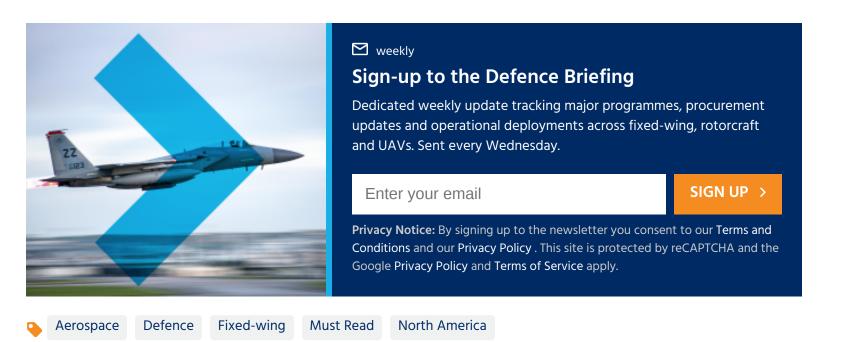
Neither the Commercial Derivative Aircraft Division at Tinker AFB (which will manage the C-40D programme), the office of the Secretary of Defense nor the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff responded to questions seeking more detail about the service's fleet strategy.

Asked to comment, the USAF says it "balances all Department of Defense and United States Air Force priorities to establish the budget".

The service has not disclosed details about its desired C-40D contract structure with Boeing, including whether it might seek a fixed-price agreement.

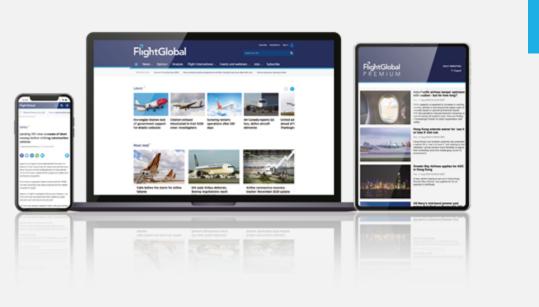
Boeing has in recent years struggled mightily under its fixed-price military deals, logging billions of dollars in charges against the programmes amid delays and cost overruns. Its fixed-price programmes include the KC-46 aerial refueller, T-7A jet trainer, MQ-25 carrier-based autonomous refueller and the new 747-derived VC-25B, the Air Force One replacement. Boeing has said it seeks to move away from fixed-price deals.

"The acquisition strategy is currently in development and completion is expected later this year," says the USAF of the C-40D programme.



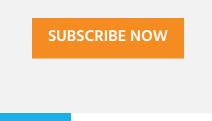


# FlightGlobal PREMIUM



Become a FlightGlobal member today and enjoy these benefits

- > Unlimited access to all digital content giving you the confidence to make informed decisions
- Never miss out on any breaking news with the Premium Daily News
  Alert direct to your inbox, our take on the key stories of the day and what they mean to you
- Monthly comprehensive round-up of the latest aviation developments in
  Flight International magazine in a format you want in print or digital
- > If you aren't ready to subscribe now, you can **sign up for free** to receive our weekly newsletters covering all areas of the aviation industry



### Related articles



#### News

### Pratt & Whitney Canada regulatory filing cites 'new' turboprop called 'PT9A-11'

11 June 2024 18:04 | By Jon Hemmerdinger

Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC) is working on regulatory approval for what it describes in a recent filing with the Federal Aviation Administration as a "new" turboprop engine called the "PT9A-11".



#### News

### Malawi's vice-president, nine others confirmed dead in Dornier 228 crash

11 June 2024 12:27 | By **Ryan Finnerty** The deaths of all aboard the Malawian army turboprop were confirmed by the president of the southeast African country on 11

June, after the flight encountered bad weather and failed to report as scheduled.



### News

### USMC upgrading one-third of F/A-18 Hornets to serve until 2030 or later

11 June 2024 11:42 | By Jan Tegler The US Marine Corps (USMC) is now half complete with a modernisation programme for its single-seat Boeing F/A-18Cs and two-seat F/A-18Ds, an effort to boost the ageing jets' capabilities as the service faces delayed deliveries of Lockheed Martin F-35s.

### LOAD MORE ARTICLES

### More from Fixed-Wing



### News

## BAE to produce electronic countermeasure pods for US Navy P-8s

11 June 2024 11:29 | By Ryan Finnerty

The \$95 million contract will see the US Navy's Boeing P-8 maritime patrol jets equipped with a BAE electronic warfare pod intended to expand the non-stealth aircraft's operating range in contested environments.



### News

### First operational Boeing F-15EX arrives with USAF for frontline service

10 June 2024 13:48 | By Ryan Finnerty The latest variant of the venerable fourth-generation air superiority fighter will begin operational service in the state of Oregon with the US Air National Guard, which is responsible for homeland defence



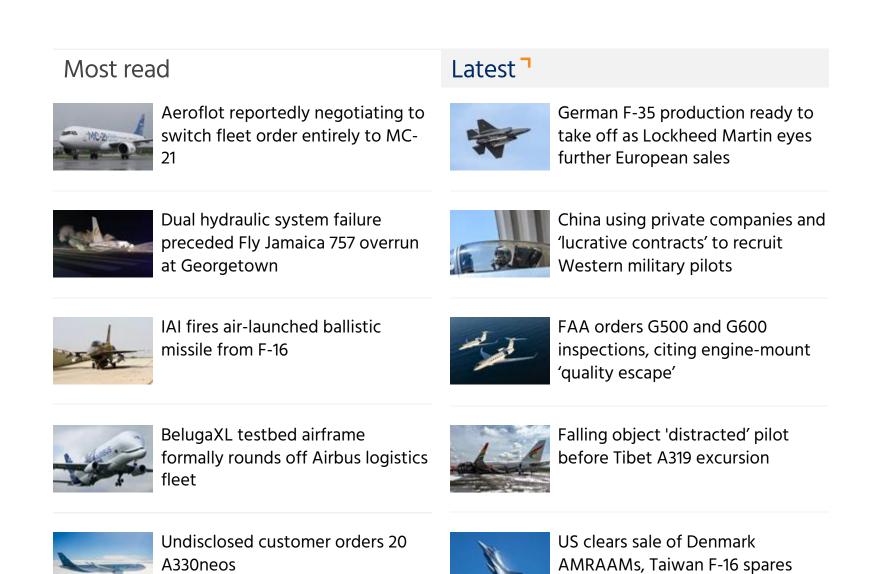


## China using private companies and 'lucrative contracts' to recruit Western military pilots

10 June 2024 13:31 | By Ryan Finnerty Intelligence agencies from the so-called "Five Eyes" alliance of the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand say China continues to recruit current and former Western military pilots to train its own forces, using privately-owned shell companies offering "lucrative contracts and the opportunity to fly exotic aircraft".

### LOAD MORE ARTICLES

and air-interdiction missions.



# FlightGlobal

FlightGlobal is the global aviation community's primary source of news, data, insight, knowledge and expertise. We provide news, data, analytics and advisory services to connect the aviation community globally and help organisations shape their business strategies, identify new opportunities and make better decisions faster.

### > Contact us

- > About us
- > Advertise with us
- > Jobs
- > Conferences and Events
- > Newsletters
- > Paid content
- > Reports

### Never miss a beat with FlightGlobal newsletters

Stay up to date with the latest trends and developments in your area of industry with high quality selected content written by FlightGlobal's team.

Airlines News
 Defence Briefing

Jobseeker Update

Aerospace Briefing

- Flight International Briefing
- Supplier Update
- Sustainable Aviation Focus 😢 Events Focus

SIGN UP

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS | FAQS | TOPICS A-Z | TERMS AND CONDITIONS | COOKIE POLICY | PRIVACY POLICY | © DVV MEDIA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

### Follow us on social media

