

Venerable B-52 may outlive snazzier, younger bombers

By **ROBERT BURNS**
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The B-52, which people have called “aging” seemingly for ages, is now likely to outlive its younger, snazzier brother bombers, the swing-wing B-1 and the stealthy B-2.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson announced Monday that her service will begin retiring the B-1 and B-2 fleets as soon as it has built enough B-21s, the next-generation bomber that is still on the drawing board and is expected to begin entering service in the mid-2020s. The pace of retirement will depend on how quickly the B-21 is acquired.

An Air Force spokeswoman, Ann Stefanek, said the B-1 and B-2 are likely to keep flying into the early 2030s.

The B-52 is expected to soar past those timelines, remaining part of the combat force until mid-century.

Aware of the political ramifications of any change in the structure of the bomber force, Wilson said the number of bomber bases will not shrink.

“If the force structure we have proposed is supported by the Congress, bases that have bombers now will



In this Jan. 10, 2016 file photo, a U.S. Air Force B-52 bomber flies over Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek, South Korea. The Air Force says the venerable B-52 bomber, which gained lasting fame in Vietnam as an aerial terror, is now likely to outlive its younger, far snazzier brother bombers, the swept-wing B-1 and the stealthy B-2.

AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, File

have bombers in the future,” Wilson said. “They will be B-52s and B-21s.”

Officially nicknamed the Stratofortress and informally known as the Big Ugly Fat Fellow, the B-52 gained

lasting fame in Vietnam as an aerial terror. It is scheduled to stay in service until 2050, assuming its gets planned upgrades, including new engines. In its 2019 budget request Monday, the Air

Force asked for \$280 million for B-52 upgrades.

Boeing built eight different models of the B-52 between 1952 and 1962. There are 75 planes left, split between Minot Air Force Base in

North Dakota and Barksdale Air Force in Louisiana. No longer the saturation bomber associated with the Vietnam war, the B-52 had been updated and adapted to a range of combat missions.

It has been used extensively in the war in Afghanistan as well as in the air campaign against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.

Just last week a B-52 pummeled a Taliban site in northern Afghanistan.

“The aircraft has played a leading role in Air Force operations for decades, and was recently reconfigured with a conventional rotary launcher to increase its reach and lethality,” the U.S. military said in announcing the Afghanistan attack.

The B-1 has an unusual history. It was initially developed in the 1970s, cancelled and then revived by President Ronald Reagan. It originally was designed for either nuclear or conventional attack but is now strictly for non-nuclear combat.

The B-2, the world’s first radar-evading bomber, was developed in secrecy by Northrop (now known as Northrop Grumman) in the 1980s and was initially best-known for its stunning price tag of more than \$1 billion per aircraft, of which 21 were built.

The Air Force now has 20 B-2s, all based at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, and 62 B-1s at several bases including Dyess Air Force Base in Texas.

Obama portrait unveiled, ears and all

By **ASHRAF KHALIL**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Barack Obama speaks, people listen. At least they did when he was in the White House. But that kind of authority didn’t hold much sway when it came time for his presidential portrait.

At a ceremony Monday to unveil portraits of him and former first lady Michelle Obama, the former president said artist Kehinde Wiley cheerfully ignored almost all of his suggestions.

“He listened very thoughtfully to what I had to say before doing exactly what he always intended to do,” he said. “I tried to negotiate less gray hair, but Kehinde’s artistic integrity would not allow it. I tried to negotiate smaller ears and struck out on that as well.”

The final product depicts Obama sitting in a straight-backed chair, leaning forward and looking serious while surrounded by greenery and flowers. Michelle Obama’s portrait, painted by Amy Sberald, shows her in a black and white dress looking thoughtful with her hand on her chin.

Both artists were personally chosen by the Obamas.

The portraits will now hang in the National Portrait Gallery, which is part of the Smithsonian group of



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Former President Barack Obama, left, speaks at the unveiling ceremony for the Obama’s official portraits at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, Monday in Washington. Obama’s portrait was painted by Artist Kehinde Wiley.

museums. The gallery has a complete collection of presidential portraits. A different set of portraits of the former first couple will eventually hang in the White House.

“I am humbled, I am honored, I am proud,” Michelle Obama said. “Young people, particularly girls and girls of color, in future years they will come to this place and see someone who looks like them hanging on the walls of this incredible institution.” Barack Obama spoke of

his choice of Wiley, saying the two men shared multiple parallels in their upbringing; both had African fathers who were largely absent from their lives and American mothers who raised them.

The former president drew multiple laughs from the audience for his remarks, starting out by praising Sberald for capturing, “the grace and beauty and charm and hotness of the woman that I love.”

Stocks power higher after a dreadful week

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks powered higher Monday, sending the Dow Jones industrial average up 410 points, as the market clawed back more of its massive losses from the previous two weeks.

Apple jumped 4 percent and led a rally in technology companies, while industrial companies, banks, and consumer-focused companies like retailers also rose.

Netflix and Amazon surged again as stocks that led the market higher in 2017 recovered more of the ground they lost recently. Energy companies got some relief as oil prices turned higher. All of that helped stocks build on the market’s gains from late Friday.

Some market watchers say the recent bout of turbulence may not be over. Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist for the Leuthold Group, said he thinks stocks and bonds will fall further as investors consider the likelihood that interest rates will keep rising and inflation will increase. Inflation

and higher wages can cut into company profits, and higher interest rates slow down economic growth.

“The catalyst behind this bull market up until maybe the last year or so has just been the ability of this economy to grow, even if it’s very sluggishly (...) without creating any negative consequences for the financial markets,” he said.

Paulsen said the consumer prices report Wednesday or the February employment report due next month could both have major effects on the market.

The Standard & Poor’s 500, the benchmark for many index funds, gained 36.45 points, or 1.4 percent, to 2,656. The Dow climbed 410.37 points, or 1.7 percent, to 24,601.27. It had risen as much as 574 earlier, led by big gains for Boeing and Apple.

The Nasdaq composite advanced 107.47 points, or 1.6 percent, to 6,981.96. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks rose 13.15 points, or 0.9 percent, to 1,490.98.



CDC via AP

Thelazia gulosa, a type of eye worm seen in cattle in the northern United States and southern Canada, but never before in humans.

14 worms pulled from Oregon woman’s eye

NEW YORK (AP) — An Oregon woman who had worms coming out of her eye is being called the first known human case of a parasitic infection spread by flies.

Fourteen tiny worms were removed from the left eye of the 26-year-old woman in August 2016. Scientists reported the case Monday.

The woman, Abby Beckley, was diagnosed in August 2016 with *Thelazia gulosa*. That’s a type of eye worm seen in cattle in the northern United States and southern Canada, but never before in humans.

They are spread by a type of fly known as “face flies.” The flies feed on the tears that lubricate the eyeball, scientists said.

She had been horseback riding and fishing in Gold Beach, Oregon, a coastal,

cattle-farming area. After a week of eye irritation, Beckley pulled a worm from her eye. She visited doctors, but removed most of the additional worms herself during the following few weeks.

The worms were translucent and each less than half an inch long.

After they were removed, no more worms were found and she had no additional symptoms.

Eye worms are seen in several kinds of animals, including cats and dogs. They can be spread by different kinds of flies.

Two other types of *Thelazia* eye worm infections had been seen in people before, but never this kind, according to Richard Bradbury of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He was the study’s lead author.

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A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply online at www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

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