

DoD Response to Northrop Grumman letter dated Dec. 1, 2009

The Department regrets that Northrop-Grumman and Airbus have taken themselves out of the tanker competition and hopes they will return when the final RFP is issued.

The Air Force tanker is a modified commercial airliner, and Boeing and Airbus make hundreds of such aircraft every year. Both companies can make a good tanker.

The Department wants competition but cannot compel the two airplane makers to compete.

Both offerors have suggested changes to the RFP that would favor their offering.

But the Department cannot and will not change the warfighter requirements for the tanker to give advantage to either competitor.

The Department has played this right down the middle and will continue to do so.

The Department has been reviewing comments and questions submitted on the basis of the draft RFP, and we will issue the final RFP when this process is completed, probably in January.