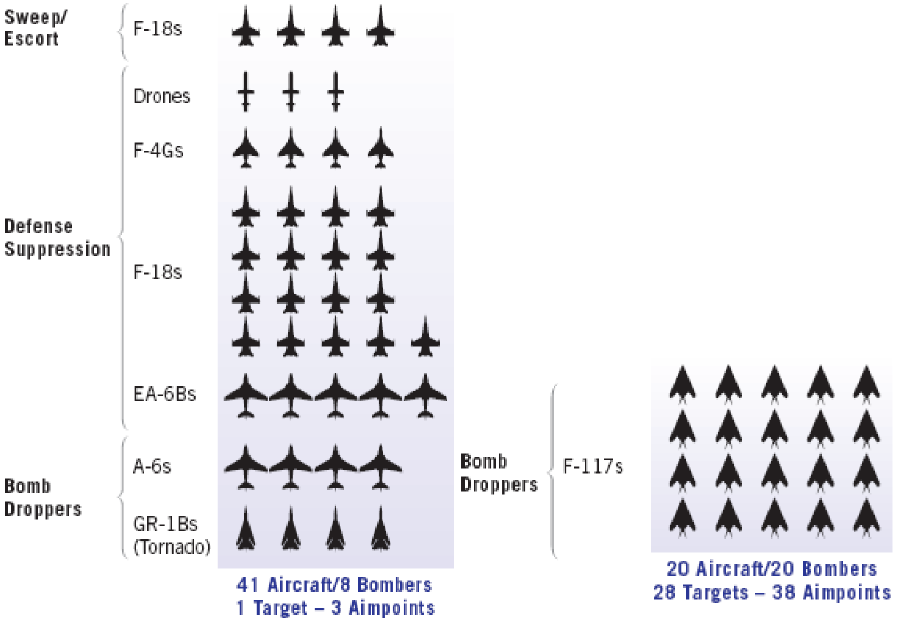
The Opportunity Cost of Legacy Assets

- What is the opportunity cost of making due with legacy assets to attain strategic results?
  - During Desert Storm, both legacy assets and high-end F-117 stealth aircraft were utilized to attack enemy centers of gravity.
  - It took a force package of 41 legacy aircraft to attack 1 target: 4 A-6s and 4 Tornadoes dropping bombs on 1 target; 4 F-4s and 17 F/A-18s providing SAM suppression; 5 EA-6Bs jamming enemy radar; 4 F/A-18s defending against enemy fighters; and 3 drones serving as decoys against enemy aircraft.
  - On the same night 20 F-117 stealth aircraft attacked 28 targets—yielding over 1000% greater target coverage with fewer than half the number of aircraft.

Which method would you choose?



The leverage of stealth: Non-stealth versus stealth attack during the opening hours of the air war.

Is building a force structure around legacy assets really cheaper in the long run?

The Opportunity Cost of Legacy Assets

- An Air Force dependent upon legacy assets faces costly long term operating expenses.
    - A tremendous number of aircraft must be maintained in the inventory to fulfill a variety of non-strategic roles to enable the core assets to successfully execute their missions.
    - This means allocating significant resources to aircraft, related equipment, maintenance, training, and personnel that must perform these ancillary missions.
    - Deploying and sustaining this many legacy aircraft in a combat theater demands significant resources and access to numerous forward bases.

The real question isn't how much do new aircraft cost, but instead what is the cumulative expense associated with pursuing Plan B?