

# *U.S. Air Force Questioned for Spending \$486 Million on Planes for Afghanistan, Then Reducing Them to Scrap*

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Washington, October 14 (RHC)-- The U.S. Air Force is facing questions over its decision to destroy 16 cargo planes purchased for Afghanistan.

The United States spent \$486 million to purchase and refurbish 20 Italian-made planes for the Afghan air force. But the program encountered what an inspector general called "continuous and severe operational difficulties, including a lack of spare parts."

The Pentagon reportedly scrapped the plan, and 16 of the planes, which were converted to scrap metal worth \$32,000 — less than a hundredth of a percent of what the program cost.

The Pentagon replaced the planes with four larger ones made by Lockheed Martin. Special Inspector General John Sopko has asked the Air Force to provide records on its decision to scrap the planes, saying he is "concerned that the officials responsible ... may not have considered other possible

alternatives in order to salvage taxpayer dollars."

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