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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: PERSONNEL RECOVERY VEHICLES

STATEMENT OF: MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT D. BISHOP, JR., ASSISTANT
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS

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Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Personnel Recovery Vehicle (PRV) with you and your subcommittee today. I am proud to say the United States Air Force has a rich and successful history in personnel recovery (PR) operations dating back to the Army Air Force period of World War II. During the Vietnam conflict alone, personnel recovery forces rescued over 3,800 personnel. PR forces have also shown their mettle in recent combat operations. During Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, PR forces supporting Operation Anaconda received an Air Force Cross, two Silver Stars, and 17 Distinguished Flying Crosses for heroism in one 48-hour period. All aircrew were rescued during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, to include a US Navy F-14 crew that was forced down due to mechanical failure in a high threat area just south of Baghdad. United States Air Force (USAF) HH-60 helicopters were the first USAF aircraft to operate from inside Iraq. Throughout their history, USAF PR forces have truly exemplified their motto "We Do These Things That Others May Live."

PRV Mission

The PRV, a new USAF acquisition program, will replace the aging HH-60G helicopter with a new medium-lift aircraft. The primary mission of the PRV, as its name implies, is personnel recovery. Personnel recovery is the umbrella term for operations focused on the aggregation of military, civil, and political efforts, which obtain the release or recovery of personnel from uncertain or hostile environments and denied areas whether they are captured, missing, or isolated. PR comprises a vast array of recovery operations including combat search and rescue (CSAR); civil search and

rescue; survival, evasion, resistance, and escape; and the coordination of negotiated as well as forcible recovery options.

PRV Design

The PRV will be designed to recover isolated personnel from hostile or denied territory. As such, the PRV is a critical asset with operations that are integrated in accordance with the six USAF Concepts of Operations (CONOPS). The PRV will be a dual-piloted, multi-engine, vertical take-off and landing platform that will bring the latest vertical lift as well as command, control, and communications technology to the CSAR mission. The aircraft will be capable of employment day or night and in adverse weather. Additionally the system will have enhanced survivability capabilities allowing it to participate in a variety of threat spectrums from conventional attacks to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threat environments. This will dramatically increase our ability to recover personnel from denied territories. PRV will have joint interoperability, compatibility, and connectivity with Joint Force command and control infrastructure and supporting agencies and assets that are essential to the execution of the mission.

The PRV will be designed to address deficiencies in the HH-60, which include service life, range/combat radius, payload, cabin volume, survivability, battlespace awareness, mission reaction time and adverse weather penetration. The PRV has a range requirement for 325 nautical miles, which is more than double the HH-60 range of 160 nautical miles for the same mission profile. The PRV has a requirement for four non-ambulatory personnel and three Para-rescue Jumpers (PJ) compared to the HH-60 ability to carry just one non-ambulatory personnel and two PJs. The HH-60 has

adequate survivability against current infrared and man portable threats, but has no radar countermeasures and, more importantly, no weight or space to add additional equipment or countermeasures without lessening its already deficient range and/or payload.

PRV Acquisition

The PRV is the planned replacement vehicle for the USAF fleet of 102 HH-60G helicopters. The service life of the HH-60 fleet is nearing its end. The Global War on Terrorism operations tempo is also aging the HH-60 fleet faster than planned with some aircraft already reaching service life in 2002. Based on the CSAR Analysis of Alternatives completed in March 2005, 141 medium lift helicopters are needed to meet the personnel recovery needs of the future. The acquisition strategy to achieve this is a developmental, incremental approach while collaborating with industry throughout the entire process. This collaboration ensures the PRV requirement is a well-informed and realistic expectation with current, available, affordable technology and ensures open and fair competition. Our desire is to have the initial block of PRV aircraft fielded by 2011, with the next block completed by 2018.

Conclusion

It is imperative we work diligently in meeting the critical personnel recovery needs of the future by replacing the aging "low density/high demand" HH-60 with an aircraft that has the capabilities required in the future battlespace. Recapitalizing our aging systems is our number one challenge. For America to hold its military advantage, the Air Force must continue to improve its capabilities to keep pace with the realities of

the future battlespace. We appreciate your support in turning this critical need into an operating reality.