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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
AIRLAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE H. LEE BUCHANAN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
(RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION)

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND FORCES

OF THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

TACTICAL AVIATION PROGRAMS

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Department of the Navy's Tactical Aviation Programs.

Your Navy and Marine Corps Team is among the most visible aspects of United States diplomacy around the world. Of the 176 overseas airbases built by the United States following World War II, the Department of Defense now has access to only 24 of them. Thus, it is routinely this Team that is first called to resolve international crises and implement national policy. Just three months ago, it achieved profound success during Operation DESERT FOX, where the USS ENTERPRISE launched more than half of all aircraft sorties. This Navy and Marine Corps Team is the first one called because it is unfettered by international agreements for the use of foreign territory. The Navy and Marine Corps Team's autonomy and self-sufficiency ensure it will freely sail and fly where this country's leaders send it.

The Department of the Navy operates ten active carrier air wings and three active Marine Corps (USMC) air wings. Our FY 2000 Aircraft Procurement budget requests $8.2 billion for 105 aircraft and other aviation modernization and upgrade programs. The 105 aircraft procured include 36 F/A-18E/F, 10 MV-22, 3 E-2C, 15 T-45, 13 CH-60S, 7 SH-60R, 1 C-40A, 8 JPATS T-6A and 12 AV-8B remanufactured aircraft.

F/A-18E/F Super Hornet

The F/A-18E/F is the Navy's principal aircraft acquisition program. In addition to providing greatly improved survivability over earlier F/A-18 models, the new E/F version will have much greater operational utility due to its larger weapons payload, increased range, and greater carrier recovery payload. F/A-18E/F aircraft will also increase carrier air-wing flexibility through its ability to refuel other strike fighters in flight. The earlier C/D model, while a very successful design, lacks the growth potential to keep pace with new technologies anticipated in future decades.

The F/A-18E/F's very successful flight-test program is nearing completion, with Initial Operational Test and Evaluation scheduled to begin in May 1999. the program continues to meet virtually all performance requirements on cost and on schedule--an unprecedented achievement for a major tactical aircraft program. The seven developmental test aircraft and four production aircraft flying today have completed more than 2,900 test flights totaling more than 4,300 flight hours. From the outset of the test program, the F/A-18E/F Engineering and Manufacturing Development phase has established itself as the most successful in the history of Naval Aviation. As with any good test program, this one has revealed opportunities for improvement, in the form of minor configuration alterations, which will be incorporated into production aircraft within cost and schedule parameters. Aerodynamic refinements to treat an asymmetric wing airflow separation anomaly (the so-called 'wing drop') were incorporated satisfactorily in test aircraft and will be installed on all production aircraft. Elimination of constraints on

the deployment of towed electronic countermeasures decoys continues to receive priority attention. Good progress has been made and a solution is anticipated this year.

Production of the 32 aircraft funded in FY 1997-1998 is proceeding well. The first delivery occurred November 1998, one month ahead of the schedule laid out in 1992. Funding for 30 FY 1999 aircraft was approved January 29, 1999. Initial Operational Capability is planned for FY 2001, and the first carrier-based overseas deployment is scheduled for FY 2002. In an effort to maximize use of procurement dollars, the FY 2000 budget requests the establishment of a multiyear procurement of the F/A-18E/F which will generate over $700 million dollars in cost avoidance savings through the Future Years Defense Program. Once fully deployed, this next generation multi-role strike fighter will give tactical Naval aviation continued air dominance into the foreseeable future, while substantially increasing the striking power of our carrier air wings.

V-22 Osprey

The MV-22 is the highest priority for Marine Corps aviation and critical to the implementation of our Operational Maneuver from the Sea concept, while the CV-22 is being procured by the Special Operations Command and is under consideration for other programs by the Air Force. The MV-22 is designed to replace the Marine Corps CH-46E and CH-53D. The Navy's FY 2000 budget request includes $796 million for procurement of 10 MV-22 aircraft, advanced procurement of $71.0 million for 16 aircraft in FY 2001, and $183.4 million for continued RDT&E for the MV-22 and CV-22. The MV-22 portion of the program completed a dedicated flight-testing phase (OT-IID) in October 1998, successfully completed initial Sea Trials aboard the USS SAIPAN in January and February 1999, and will commence Operational Evaluation (OPEVAL) in October 1999. The CV-22 completed Critical Design Review in December 1998. The Air Force's FY 2000 budget request includes funds for support costs and advance procurement of the first production lot of CV-22 aircraft.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) is the Department of Defense's next-generation strike aircraft for the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and several of our allies. The Department of the Navy's FY 2000 budget request for JSF RDT&E is $241 million. The program emphasizes affordability—reducing development cost, production cost, and the cost of ownership. The JSF program is merging fully validated and affordable joint operational requirements with demonstrated cost-leveraging technologies and flying concept-demonstrator aircraft to lower risk and cost prior to entering Engineering and Manufacturing Development of the JSF in FY 2001.

The current phase of the JSF program is laying the foundation for an affordable family of common strike aircraft, which meets or exceeds anticipated individual Service requirements. Initial delivery of operational JSF aircraft variants is expected in 2008 for the Marines and in 2010 for the Navy. Maintaining the JSF schedule is vital to the future

of Navy and Marine Corps aviation since we base current acquisition decisions on that schedule. For instance, the acquisition objective for the F/A-18E/F was reduced to between 548 and 785 aircraft in the QDR, depending upon the pace JSF production can achieve. Carrier air wings composed of both the F/A-18E/F and JSF will provide operational commanders great flexibility well into the 21st Century.

The JSF Program is also developing an alternate engine for competition in the production phase. The Department is committed to funding the program now and in future years.

AV-8B Remanufacture

The FY 1998 Defense Appropriations Act and the FY 1999 Defense Authorization Act approved multiyear procurement for the AV-8B remanufacture aircraft. The AV-8B FY 1999 through FY 2001 budget is predicated on a three year multiyear profile. With Congressional multiyear approval in FY 1998, the Department of the Navy and the contractor worked together to find a method of incorporating the FY 1998 airframe contract into the multiyear profile. While the 12 FY 1998 aircraft were negotiated as a single year contract, a re-opener clause was incorporated into the FY 1998 contract allowing us to include the FY 1998 aircraft as part of the multiyear contract. The AV-8B FY 2000 budget request for $291.3 million reflects the third procurement year of a four-year multiyear program (FY 1998 – FY 2001).

E-2C

The E-2C Hawkeye carrier based surveillance aircraft extends the carrier task force defense perimeters by providing early warning of approaching enemy air and surface units and vectoring interceptors and strike aircraft to the attack. The E-2C also provides area surveillance, intercept, search and rescue coordination, communications relay, and strike/air traffic control. The FY 2000 budget request includes $383 million for three aircraft. Expected savings from the proposed E-2C multiyear program totals $204 million.

Helicopters

The UH-1N is a two-seat, combat utility helicopter that provides airborne C2, supporting-arms coordination, medical evacuation, maritime special operations, insertion/extraction and search and rescue capabilities. The AH-1W is a multi-mission, two-seat, tandem cockpit, twin engine attack helicopter capable of land and sea-based operations. It provides close air support under day, night and adverse weather conditions. The Marine Corps H-1 upgrade (4BN/4BW) program remanufactures the current inventory of UH-1N and AH-1W aircraft. It replaces the current two-bladed rotor system on these aircraft with a new, four bladed, all-composite rotor system coupled with a sophisticated fully integrated, state-of-the-art cockpit. Newly designated as UH-1Y and AH-1Z respectively, they will have 85 percent common components including engines, drive train, rotor head and avionics and provide major performance improvements that

support Operational Maneuver from the Sea and Urban Warfare with versatility that far surpasses our aging assault support aircraft. The H-1 Program recently completed its Critical Design Review and is expected to commence developmental flight operations in October 1999.

Over the last three years Navy rotary-wing aviation has directed its future toward affordable rotary wing combat capabilities via the Navy Helicopter Master Plan. The Helicopter Master Plan will reduce the types, models and series of aging Navy helicopters from eight to only two multi-mission, re-configurable aircraft; the SH-60R and the CH-60S.

The SH-60R is the configuration with the largest tactical mission content. Through an efficient remanufacture program the SH-60B surface combatant aircraft, the SH-60F aircraft carrier inner zone anti-submarine warfare aircraft, and the HH-60H combat search and recovery and special operations aircraft will receive required Service Life Extension improvements that also consolidate airframe configurations. It will also receive mid-life avionics upgrades as new warfare requirements arise. The SH-60R will include Inverse Synthetic Aperture Radar, Active Low Frequency Sonar and a modern computer suite, improving the battle group's total tactical capabilities, particularly in the littoral environment.

The CH-60S is a new and streamlined production program. Our acquisition strategy has leveraged the U.S. Army's UH-60 multi-service, multi-year contract, modifying the UH-60 with SH-60 marinized components to quickly provide the CH-60S with a minimum of development costs. This helicopter is intended to provide embarked capabilities for routine deployment that include combat logistics, combat search and rescue, and Naval special warfare, as well as providing range and air station support. Pending the outcome of on-going evaluations, the CH-60S may also provide an airborne mine counter-measures capability that would be organic to Navy fleets. The CH-60 will replace the Navy's aging CH-46D, H-1, H-2, and H-3, the HH-60H, and possibly the MH-53 platforms. Following an anticipated FY 1999 above threshold reprogramming from procurement to R&D to fully fund the refined cost estimate for development, CH-60S procurement will continue a low rate initial production.

The reduction of Navy helicopter models to the SH-60R and the CH-60S will increase inventory commonality. Because of the consolidation of associated support infrastructure, supply support, training, and publications, the Navy Helicopter Master Plan will result in savings and avoidances of future Operations and Support costs which may exceed $18 billion over the product life cycle of these aircraft.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The FY 2000 Budget request also incorporates funding previously carried in Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office budget lines that were transferred to the Navy last fiscal year. These funds will be used to integrate and produce Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Systems capable of vertical take-off and landing that will meet the Navy's need to field a tactical reconnaissance capability for all aviation capable ships as well as

expeditionary Marine units. Reconnaissance program funding will be balanced between manned and unmanned aerial capabilities to suit the Navy's dynamic requirements.

SUMMARY

Mr. Chairman, aviation procurement programs, especially those for the F/A-18 and the V-22, are crucial to the success of Naval and Marine Corps Aviation for the next two decades—a success which translates directly to our military and to our nation. The Navy and Marine Corps Acquisition Team continues to work very hard to establish a blend of aviation procurement programs which maximizes our benefits from current equipment and buys smart for the future. We are striving to institutionalize those new procurement mechanisms that work well, such as multiyear procurement, and make acquisition success a common occurrence. We communicate fully and openly with Congress, industry, our warfighters, and our acquisition professionals, to do everything it takes to make sure our Sailors and Marines are provided with the safest, most dependable, and highest performance equipment available. We appreciate the support provided by Congress and look forward to working together with this Committee toward a secure future for our nation.