

STATEMENT OF
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(RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION)

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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.

When our Nation calls for military power, we demand it quickly. On the first night of the 1998 attacks against Iraq, firepower and air operations were drawn exclusively from Navy ships to avoid the associated security and political complications of using land based forces. While our sister services, the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard, provide complementary assets, the defining characteristic of the Navy and Marine Corps Team is that we accomplish our goals and exercise our influence readily and from the sea. We are expeditionary forces with virtually unlimited reach and we are often able to avoid political issues associated with overseas basing and overflights. Operating over 4,000 aircraft across the globe, our mobility, adaptability, and immense firepower make us an especially potent force.

Our Navy and Marine Corps units played key roles in the Kosovo operations. Strike aircraft from USS KEARSAGE and USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT combined with Naval land based aircraft and flew thousands of combat sorties, achieving remarkable levels of precision, and suffering zero losses. Navy and Marine Corps EA-6B aircraft were

the only standoff jammers available to NATO forces and accompanied all U.S. strikes—as well as those flown with allies—during over 1600 missions. Carrier group based S-3Bs and SH-60B helicopters, combined with P-3C Orion aircraft from shore to patrol continuously the Adriatic Sea throughout the campaign against sea-borne threats.

We would like to say this pace of operation is unusual. It is not, however. In the 84-month period ending this past September, Naval forces participated in 80 contingencies, from combat to disaster relief. In short, we continue to balance today's readiness with modernization and re-capitalization for the future. To do this, we are taking a strategy-based approach that is built upon two fundamental concepts: our enduring role of forward presence, and knowledge superiority, an emerging aspect of our operations that is truly transforming the Naval Service.

As you know, the enduring Navy-Marine Corps contribution to national security is combat-credible forward presence. Naval forces present and engaged forward—where our most vital economic, political, and military interests are concentrated—provide a framework of security and stability that helps other instruments of national power to shape regions of interest. During crisis or conflict, forward-deployed and forward-based naval forces are positioned for timely response. This same Navy-Marine Corps Team, at the “tip of the spear,” can enable the projection of joint and combined power into a theater of operations.

The Department of the Navy operates 10 active carrier air wings and three active Marine Corps (USMC) air wings. The Fiscal Year 2001 Aircraft Procurement, Navy budget requests almost \$8 billion for aircraft and other aviation modernization and upgrade programs. The tactical platforms procured include 42 F/A-18E/F, 10 AV-8B Remanufacture, and 5 E-2C aircraft.

F/A-18E/F Super Hornet

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

The F/A-18E/F completed a very successful development flight-test program in April 1999. Operational Test and Evaluation (OPEVAL) began in May 1999 and finished on schedule in mid-November 1999. The OPEVAL report, released in mid February of this year, confirmed that the F/A-18E/F is operationally effective, operationally suitable and ready to enter full-scale production. The Super Hornet Fleet Readiness Squadron,

VFA-122, was commissioned in January 1999, and is currently training the initial complement of instructors. Training of the first fleet squadron begins in June 2000.

All 12 of the first Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) aircraft funded in Fiscal Year 1997 were delivered ahead of schedule. Production of the 50 aircraft funded in Fiscal Year 1998-1999 is proceeding well, with four of the second LRIP aircraft delivered ahead of schedule. The Department of the Navy requested approval for multiyear procurement over five years in the Fiscal Year 2000 budget. The Secretary of Defense request to Congress for approval of the five year multiyear procurement contract is anticipated in April 2000. We are negotiating to go on contract this Spring, after completing all required activities to support the Full Rate Production Milestone and reporting the required certifications to Congress.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

The JSF is the Department of Defense's next-generation strike aircraft for the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and potentially several of our allies. The Department of the Navy's Fiscal Year 2001 budget request for JSF RDT&E is \$428 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 Fiscal Year 2001.

The current phase of the JSF program is laying the foundation for an affordable, highly common family of strike aircraft, which meets or exceeds individual Service requirements. 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. All F-14 squadrons will begin transitioning to F/A-18F in Fiscal Year 2002 and the F-14 will be phased out of the inventory by Fiscal Year 2008. Initial delivery of operational JSF aircraft variants is anticipated in Fiscal Year 2008 for the Marines and in Fiscal Year 2010 for the Navy. Maintaining the JSF schedule is vital to the future of Navy and Marine Corps aviation.

AV-8B Remanufacture

The Fiscal Year 1998 Appropriations Act approved multiyear procurement for the AV-8B Remanufacture aircraft a year earlier than the planned Department of the Navy request for a multiyear program. The AV-8B Fiscal Year 2001 budget request for \$226.6 million for procurement of 10 AV-8B remanufactured aircraft reflects the fourth procurement year of a four year multiyear program (Fiscal Years 1998 – 2001). The Fiscal Year 2001 budget request also includes \$24.7 million in RDT&E funding for the AV-8B Open System Core Avionics Requirement initiative and \$13.4 million for continued RDT&E for the AV-8B.

EA-6B

The EA-6B is the Department of Defense's sole airborne support jammer. These aircraft are operated by Navy, Marine and Air Force crews. Currently the aircraft are being modified to a common configuration and equipped with new improved jamming pods. The EA-6B will begin receiving the new Improved Capability III (ICAP III) upgrade in Fiscal Year 2002. The ICAP III system will significantly improve the EA-6B's receivers which will enable improved jamming performance. The ICAP III will also provide increased battle space connectivity. The Navy is also leading a two-year, Joint Services, Analysis of Alternatives to determine what overall Department of Defense standoff jammer capabilities are needed as the follow on to the EA-6B. The intent of this analysis is to define a system or systems that can augment the existing EA-6B force as its inventory begins declining in the Fiscal Year 2010 decade. Ultimately, this new capability would replace all EA-6Bs.

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 Fiscal Year 2001 Budget request includes \$321 million for five aircraft. Expected savings through the E-2C multiyear program total \$204 million.

SUMMARY

Mr. Chairman, our aviation procurement programs, especially those for the F/A-18 E/F and JSF, are crucial to the success of Navy 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 continue to communicate fully and openly with Congress, industry, our warfighters, and our acquisition professionals, and are doing 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.