

Testimony to the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee (HAC-D)
Representative Patrick Meehan (PA-07)
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Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Visclosky, and Members of the Subcommittee, I want to begin by thanking you for offering Members this opportunity to discuss national security priorities through this Member Day hearing. Formerly, under the leadership of now full Committee Chairman Frelinghuysen, this Subcommittee has a history of putting our Nation's security first. I personally appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on issues for the upcoming budget and look forward to working with you Chairwoman Granger in your new role. It would appear that the Subcommittee is off to a great start.

Without having the details of the FY2018 budget, I come before the Subcommittee to discuss two particular rotorcraft programs that are critical to our warfighters and to maintaining the strength of the American defense industrial base.

The V-22 Osprey is the expeditionary platform of choice for the Marine Corps, and continues to be a workhorse for our Air Force Special Operations Command. The V-22's one-of-a-kind capabilities allow for mission flexibility and enable our warfighters to operate safely in the most austere and dangerous environments. I am pleased that the Navy will join the ranks of V-22 operators as it begins procurement of CMV-22s this year for its carrier onboard delivery (COD) mission. Serving as a logistics hub for aircraft carriers, the CMV-22 will transform deck operations and support for the carrier strike fleet in the COD mission.

It has come to my attention that the FY2018 budget will request a third multiyear procurement contracting authority. These longer contracts for stable and proven programs like the V-22 promote supplier and manufacturing efficiency, take advantage of economies of scale and encourage investment in cost savings initiatives. The previous two multiyear contracts for the V-22 program saved taxpayers over \$1 billion. While protecting taxpayer dollars, these contracts have also ensured that our warfighters have the resources necessary to protect our nation's interests here and abroad. It's for these reasons why I'd encourage the Air Force to take advantage of the multiyear procurement contract to procure additional CV-22s for its Long Range Personnel Recovery Mission. Air Force leadership have suggested that CV-22s make sense for the mission because of superior range and speed. The Air Force needs to be decisive to add them to the multiyear procurement contract, which will save taxpayers tens of millions in procurement costs.

The budget should also reflect the development efforts to create a common configuration of the diverse MV-22 models. The FY2018 program will improve fleet readiness and insert technology as MV-22s upgrade from a Block B configuration to a Block C configuration. As the Subcommittee considers the totality of the V-22 Osprey program, I'd ask that you support the multiyear procurement and common configuration effort, and encourage the Air Force to add CV-22s in the multiyear procurement contract for the Long Range Personnel Recovery Mission.

I'd also like to discuss the CH-47 Chinook, the Army's only heavy lift helicopter which performs a wide range of combat, logistical and humanitarian missions. The MH-47 variant provides key capabilities to the U.S. Special Operations Command. Both the CH-47 and the MH-47 aircraft continue to perform well in combat theaters. They fly over three times the normal peacetime operating tempo while maintaining readiness rates above the Army standard.

FY2017 happens to be the last year of the current five-year procurement contract for the Chinook. Much like the Osprey, this multi-year contract saved U.S. taxpayers nearly \$1 billion when compared with

single-year contracts. Due to budget constraints in the Army, only 22 aircraft were requested in the President's FY 2017 budget. This is five fewer aircraft than were called for in the multiyear. I am grateful that the Subcommittee generously added five Chinooks to restore aircraft cuts in the FY2017 budget. Unfortunately, they are not in the FY2017 Defense Appropriations bill that was filed on March 2, 2017. I would respectfully request that the Subcommittee consider adding them in FY2018.

While we do not have the President's FY2018 defense budget yet, it's anticipated that it will request 13 aircraft: nine CH-47s for the Army and four MH-47s for SOCOM. The Army is in a year of transition for the Chinook program. It has invested funding in a Block II modernization plan to improve the payload capability, increase commonality between SOCOM and conventional forces and establish a baseline configuration for future system upgrades. As the Subcommittee considers the Chinook program, I encourage you to support the Budget Request for the procurement of the additional 13 aircraft as well as research for the Block II modernization effort.

These two priorities, the V-22 Osprey and the CH-47 Chinook, will help the warfighter as well as the workers that supply the manpower, parts and expertise to build such capable aircraft. I will support a Fiscal Year 2018 budget that reflects the importance to our armed forces that these priorities can provide. Thank you very much again for the opportunity to testify.