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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

HEARING DATE/TIME: 30 June 2021, 3:00 P.M.

SUBJECT: Department of the Air Force Rotorcraft Acquisition and Modernization Programs in
the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization President's Budget Request

STATEMENT OF:

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Introduction and Strategic Environment

Chairman Norcross, Ranking Member Hartzler, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for having us here today to provide testimony on Department of the Air Force rotorcraft modernization efforts. Thanks to the support of this subcommittee, we have made great strides in our efforts to improve rotorcraft readiness and set the tone for modernization, but there remains work to be done.

As the nature and sources of conflict throughout the globe have become more diverse and less predictable, our Nation continues to face a complex set of current and future security challenges, including the resurgence of great power competition from China and Russia. It is clear that supremacy in the air and space domains—a given for any U.S. military operation since the end of the Cold War—can no longer be presumed without deliberate action.

Since the publication of the National Defense Strategy in 2018, the Air Force has worked tirelessly to identify new ways of approaching our toughest challenges in a peer fight, to include careful assessment of current and future risks. This year's budget request is another step in the right direction, but our work is far from over. We look forward to working with this subcommittee and all of our stakeholders as we continue our efforts to build a relevant and ready force for the future.

Current Capacity and Capability

Following the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance of the President, and the National Defense Strategy, the Department of the Air Force seeks to invest in technologies and field systems that are both lethal and survivable against a peer threat. As we continue to invest in our future force, it is important to also consider the manpower that is made available through right-sizing efforts. If we are to modernize to address the emerging threat, we must efficiently

utilize resources tied to our legacy platforms and weapons systems that are decreasing in relevance today and will be irrelevant in the future; we must strike a balance between risk in the near-term and risk in the future.

Rotorcraft

The mission of the United States Air Force is to fly, fight, and win...Airpower anytime, anywhere. Military airpower is global, agile, flexible, rapid, and when necessary, highly destructive. Department of the Air Force rotorcraft are key components of the National Defense Strategy's lethal force modernization effort, providing a modern and more reliable personnel recovery special operations, nuclear security, and continuity of government platforms across the spectrum of military operations.

The Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget continues investment in the Department of the Air Force's critical rotorcraft modernization programs, including the HH-60G Pave Hawk, HH-60W Jolly Green II, and MH-139A Grey Wolf programs.

HH-60G Pave Hawk and HH-60W Jolly Green II

The Department of the Air Force is the only Service with a dedicated force organized, trained, and equipped to execute theater-wide Personnel Recovery. The HH-60G fleet currently accomplishes this mission by conducting day and night Combat Search and Rescue operations to recover isolated personnel in hostile or permissive environments. Due to the increasing age and current attrition rates of the HH-60G, the Department of the Air Force must continue to sustain and support existing HH-60G helicopters to meet Combatant Command requirements until we can fully recapitalize with the HH-60W Jolly Green II. To that end, the Air Force will continue with defensive systems upgrades to ensure that the HH-60G can continue to perform its mission until the last aircraft is retired. HH-60G retirements began this year (FY21) with 34

aircraft and will complete in FY26. This retirement timeline aligns with the completion of fielding 105 HH-60W rotorcraft through FY27. The first operational unit has already begun receiving the first production aircraft. The FY22 budget requests \$15.6 million and \$996.7 million for the HH-60G and HH-60W programs, respectively. This budget request funds procurement of 14 HH-60W aircraft in FY22 which will bring the total up to 65 aircraft on order. Testing of the new HH-60W Jolly Green II is transitioning from developmental test into operational test with Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) set to start on October 1, 2021.

The FY22 budget continues funding the Capabilities Upgrade program for the HH-60W to bridge the capability gap between the program's 2014 requirements and the current threat environment. The primary upgrade focus for FY22 includes the Distributed Aperture Infrared Countermeasure (DAIRCM) system and security upgrades to the Link-16 datalink system. These are key components to ensure safe and secure operations downrange. Existing survivability systems of the HH-60W include a more advanced radar warning system, defensive crew-served gun systems, ballistic armor, and infrared signature reduction.

The current program is funded to procure 105 aircraft within the FYDP; the FY22 request will bring the total to 65. The Air Force is not currently pursuing funding for the remaining 8 aircraft of the previously planned 113 program of record.

MH-139A Grey Wolf

The MH-139A (formerly UH-1N Replacement) program is an element of the Air Force nuclear enterprise reform initiatives and also supports operational airlift within the National Capital Region. The MH-139A offers significant capability increases in areas of speed, range, endurance, payload, and survivability. This program plans to deliver 80 replacement helicopters,

training devices, and associated support equipment to replace the legacy UH-1Ns. The FY22 budget requests \$16 million of RDT&E funding for the MH-139A program, which will fund the continued test and development of the aircraft since the production contract award has been delayed until FY23. The first six EMD aircraft have been delivered and are being utilized to finalize test and development efforts.

The FY22 President's Budget reflects a schedule slip to the MH-139A program, caused by technical issues that will delay Boeing from obtaining full Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification. The FAA requires the MH-139A to obtain an updated certification because it is a commercial derivative aircraft with military unique equipment. Technical issues discovered during contractor testing have caused the certification delay.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this Subcommittee. The dialogue we have today will help us design, build, and operate a force capable of fighting and winning now and in the future. Our adversaries are not standing by idle; neither must we.