

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,
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Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays April 11, 2003

Acquisition reform at the Department of Defense (DOD) remains a promise unfulfilled. Despite much-heralded intentions to shed Cold War inefficiencies and bad habits, the Pentagon is still falling prey to rampant cost growth and interminable schedule slippage in the development of multi-billion dollar weapon systems.

The gulf between promise and practice has been apparent for some time in tactical aircraft acquisitions, particularly the Air Force F/A-22 *Raptor* program. As in the past, we appear poised to spend far more than planned for far fewer aircraft.

In three previous hearings before this Subcommittee on F-22 development and production reforms, successive projections of stabilized costs and realistic timelines have proven, at best, optimistic. With projected production costs now \$6.7 billion over the \$36.8 billion statutory cap, the magnitude and persistence of rosy, but wrong, estimates suggest problems far more fundamental than mere overconfidence.

For some time, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has been studying F-22 acquisition strategies and DOD adherence to commercial best practices. At the request of our Subcommittee colleague, Congressman John Tierney (MA-6), GAO also examined current production cost projections and the extent to which those costs are being accurately conveyed to Congress. Today, we also release a GAO report done at the Subcommittee's request that finds substantial waste stemming from a failure to develop standardized, rather than system-specific, aircraft test and maintenance equipment.

Unless aggressive cost controls and other acquisition reform strategies are embraced by F-22 program management, the aptly named *Raptor* is at risk of devouring itself. As we will hear in testimony today, findings and recommendations by GAO and others on tactical aircraft acquisitions aim to stop the hemorrhaging of time and money in the F-22 program, and prevent those problems in other major procurements critical to fighter fleet modernization.

All our witnesses bring important information and expertise to our discussion, and we look forward to their testimony. We are particularly grateful to Comptroller General David Walker for his leadership of GAO on this issue, and we appreciate the continued, thorough and thoughtful work by Mr. Tierney in this oversight.

Welcome.