

ramp of 28 H-1s during Fiscal Year 2010 will lead to continued reliance on aging helicopters that should have been retired from the inventory years ago. This happens at a time when the Secretary of Defense appears poised to issue guidance to the Military Departments to increase rotary-wing assets to conduct current and future Irregular Warfare conflicts.

As we focus on operations in Afghanistan, sustaining the introduction of the H-1 is vital to our future success. We have prioritized UH-1Y deliveries early in the program in an effort to quickly replace our aging fleet of UH-1N helicopters. While the UH-1N has served us well for many decades, it has now reached the point where its available power and key aircrew systems are simply not adequate for robust combat operations. As typically configured, UH-1N loads are often reduced to just two or three combat configured Marines when operating at high density altitudes. Because of these severe operational limitations, we have been very aggressive in transitioning to the significantly improved capabilities of the UH-1Y. Our first Marine Expeditionary Unit detachment of three new aircraft deployed to the Central Command AOR this year when only ten UH-1Ys had been delivered to the fleet. In November 2009, we plan to deploy our first full squadron to Afghanistan where the UH-1Y's improved payload and airspeed in that challenging environment will serve our Marines well.

Once we deploy the UH-1Y to theater, we want to keep it there. However, in order to sustain our anticipated combat deployment schedule, production must remain on track. With recent deliveries occurring well ahead of schedule and substantial contractor investments in tooling and long-lead materials, there is tangible evidence that the production rate of 28 helicopters contained in the President's budget request can be met.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to correspond with you and expand on this important subject. The supporting documentation you requested is attached. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call on me. I also thank you for your leadership and longstanding efforts on behalf of our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,

JAMES T. CONWAY,
General, U.S. Marine Corps,
Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Mr. LIEBERMAN, Madam President, in his letter, General Conway writes:

Procurement of less than the optimum ramp up of 28 H-1s in fiscal year 2010 will lead to continued reliance on aging helicopters that should have been retired from the inventory years ago. As we focus on operations in Afghanistan, sustaining the introduction of the H-1 is vital for our future success.

He continues:

Because of the severe operational limitations of the Corps' legacy helicopters, the Marines are transitioning toward the significantly improved capabilities of the UH-1Y.

General Conway points out that the Corps has already sent three UH-1Y to Afghanistan and will deploy its full squadron of them this November. This is a plane the Marines desperately need in combat today.

I also want to read from a letter I received from Major General Bockel, retired, Army Reserve, now acting director of the Reserve Officers Association. General Bockel says in his letter to me:

The Reserve Officers Association, representing 65,000 Reserve Component mem-

bers, supports the Lieberman-McCain Alternate Engine Amendment. This amendment restores critical funding to procure helicopters that the United States Marine Corps urgently needs in Afghanistan.

I suspect the Reserve Officers Association will no more support an effort to ask our special operations forces, as the second-degree or side-by-side amendment Senator BAYH will offer, to pay the bill for an unnecessary second engine than he was to see our Marines foot the bill.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD Major General Bockel's letter.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2009.

Hon. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN,
Hart Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LIEBERMAN: The Reserve Officers Association, representing 65,000 Reserve Component members, supports Lieberman-McCain Alternate Engine Amendment. This amendment restores critical funding to procure helicopters that the United States Marine Corps (USMC) urgently needs in Afghanistan.

In the Senate Armed Services Committee's mark of the National Defense Authorization Act, the bill would cut funds for the procurement of Marine Corps UH-1Y helicopters and the AH-1Z Super Cobra in order to fund an unnecessary "alternate engine" for F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The Bell UH-1Y Venom is a twin-engine medium size utility helicopter, part of the USMC's H-1 upgrade program, replacing the Marines aging fleet of UH-1N Twin Huey light utility helicopters first introduced in the early 1970s. The Corps' current fleet of utility helicopters face noticeable operational limitations at high altitudes, which is not a problem for the new UH-1Y. Because of the severe limitations, which can have an impact on operational agility, the USMC is aggressively transitioning to the new aircraft.

The Pentagon had requested 28 AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters, but NDAA markups have reduced these numbers to offset funding. This amendment would restore \$482.9 in funding that was stripped from the U.S. Marine Corps UH-1Y program, which is an action that ROA supports.

Thank you for your efforts on this key issue, and other support to the military that you have shown in the past. Please feel free to have your staff call ROA's legislative director, Marshall Hanson, with any question or issue you would like to discuss.

Sincerely,

DAVID R. BOCKEL,
MAJOR GENERAL, USAR (RETIRED),
Acting Executive Director.

Mr. LIEBERMAN, Madam President, let me talk now about what this amendment would do. It would essentially remove the funding for the second engine, but it does it in a way that I think is thoughtful. It requires that there be no obligation of any funds on the development of a second engine for the Joint Strike Fighter unless and until the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress that the development and procurement of such an engine will reduce the total life-cycle costs of the program, improve the operational read-

iness of the F-35 fleet, and avoid either disrupting the Joint Strike Fighter Program or resulting in procurement of fewer Joint Strike Fighter aircraft during the life cycle of the program.

Why do we propose these conditions? Because they are the benefits the proponents of the second engine claim it will deliver. So we ask that the second engine be judged on its alleged merits. And I hope my colleagues will agree that this is a fair way to go at this.

I have spoken already at the outset about the fact that there was a competition for the engine for the Joint Strike Fighter that took place in 1996. Ultimately, one engine won the competition while the other lost. Understandably, but not acceptably, the makers of the engine that lost have come back to achieve by legislation—or attempt to—what they could not achieve by competition.

The proponents of the second engine have also claimed that it would lower costs on the Joint Strike Fighter Program overall. I have cited numbers that come from the Pentagon and elsewhere arguing on the other hand that this program will cost over \$6 billion of taxpayer money without any showing, really, that it will save money. Developing a second engine, quite logically and following common sense, would require the Department of Defense to maintain two logistics operations to support it—tails, as it is called in the military, two tails, two sets of training manuals, two sets of tooling component improvement parts. These additional and unnecessary expenses would raise operations and sustainment costs for the Joint Strike Fighter throughout the life cycle of the program.

I want to get to the impact funding a second engine—an unnecessary engine, a costly engine—would have on the Joint Strike Fighter Program.

On June 9, the Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Air and Land, which I have the honor of chairing, heard testimony from LTG Mark Shackelford, Military Deputy Officer to the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition. He is in charge of acquisition. I asked General Shackelford whether development of a second engine would disrupt the Joint Strike Fighter Program. His explanation is detailed but important to hear. It has a very strong message:

The fiscal year 2010 production quantity for the joint strike fighter is 30 aircraft, split between three variants.

That means with three different services.

If forced to pay for the alternate engine, we would have to reduce that to two to four, depending on which of the variants. That has a negative effect on the unit cost of the remaining aircraft if you are buying fewer. It also ripples into next year's quantities, and then as we take that 2010 increment of dollars and extend that out through the future year defense program—

Which is the 5-year so-called fit up that the Pentagon does planning on—there are equal decrements in terms of the numbers of aircraft that we can buy with the remaining dollars.