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**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY
PROCUREMENT
NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS HEARING**

This afternoon, we welcome witnesses from the Department of the Navy to receive testimony on the Navy and Marine Corps modernization programs.

The Fiscal Year 2001 Navy and Marine Corps procurement budget request is \$26.6 billion. Compared to the Fiscal Year 2000 appropriation of \$23.4 billion, that's a 13.6 percent increase. However, this budget request is also about \$400 million, or 1.5 percent, less than the Administration told us it would be when the budget for Fiscal Year 2000 was submitted.

A 13.6 percent increase in this procurement budget may sound like a boost, but, as a result of diminished modernization budgets over the past seven years it is not nearly enough.

Last month, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Johnson, warned the Committee that while the Navy meets its commitments, it does not do so without increasing demands on its people and equipment. He told us "there is growing evidence that our forces are stretched too thinly." He also said "the submarine force is no longer able to meet all the regional CINCs' requirements due to the draw-down in force level." Additionally, he mentioned that the Kosovo campaign placed an extraordinary demand for low density assets like the EA-6B which, he said, is accelerating the end of their projected service lives due to the unplanned additional operating tempo.

General Jones, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, also appeared before our committee last month. While he's justifiably proud of today's Corps, he also touched on a few reasons why today's budget is not enough. He noted the demand on the Marine Corps' F/A-18D fleet in the Kosovo operation because the F/A-18A fleet simply wasn't up to the task of combat. The F/A-18A currently has a limited weapons capability and is unable to operate under the NATO air command and control system.

So far, only 34 of the Marine Corps' 76 F/A-18As have been funded for upgrades that would have made them operationally employable. Six additional aircraft are funded for the upgrades in the Fiscal Year

(More)

2001 budget request before us today. However, according to the current plans, only 14 more F/A-18As will be modernized in the next five years, leaving 22 aircraft undeployable!

The Commandant also noted that production of the MV-22—the replacement for the 40-year-old CH-46E and CH-53D fleets—is slated to increase to only 28 aircraft per year in 2003. This production rate is down from the 30-aircraft per year envisioned just last year.

Because this budget is not enough, both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps have submitted a combined unfunded requirements amount of \$6.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2001 alone. In the remaining years of the Future Years Defense Program from 2002 to 2005, unfunded requirements in the Navy and Marine Corps total an additional \$27.9 billion.

With us today, for what I hope will be a candid discussion of Navy and Marine Corps modernization programs, are:

Dr. Lee Buchanan
Assistant Secretary of the Navy
(Research, Development & Acquisition)

Vice Adm. Conrad Lautenbacher
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations
(Resources, Warfare Requirements & Assessments)

Lt. Gen. Michael Williams
Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs & Resources
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

As always, we're delighted to have all of you with us. Secretary Buchanan, before I turn the floor over to you, I first want to call upon Curt Weldon, Chairman of our Research and Development Subcommittee, who is co-chairing today's hearing, for any remarks he may have—followed by Norm Sisisky and Owen Pickett—the ranking Democrats on the Procurement and R&D Subcommittees, respectively.

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