

## DELEGATION MEMBERS URGE BUSH ADMINISTRATION NOT TO CUT F-22 FUNDING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 5, 2005

### DELEGATION MEMBERS URGE BUSH ADMINISTRATION NOT TO CUT F-22 FUNDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Senator Christopher Dodd and Reps. Nancy Johnson, Christopher Shays, Rosa DeLauro, John Larson and Rob Simmons today voiced strong opposition to possible cuts by the Bush administration to the F/A-22 fighter program. In a letter to White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, the delegation members stated that cuts to the program were ill-advised and untimely given the operational shortfalls facing our military and the threats facing our nation. The text of the letter is below.

Dear Mr. Card:

We understand that the Department of Defense is considering cutting funding in the fiscal year 2006-2010 President's budget request for the F/A-22 Raptor. We believe that these cuts are ill-advised and untimely given the operational shortfalls facing our military and the threats facing our nation.

Specifically, the F-15C is no longer the most sophisticated fighter aircraft in the world. This fact places the safety of US forces around the world at risk until a suitable replacement is fielded that can ensure air superiority. The only aircraft in development that can fulfill this requirement is the F/A-22 Raptor. Limiting production to one hundred seventy Raptors, as the Department is considering, will result in an F/A-22 fleet too small to achieve the global air superiority requirements that our Nation's global presence requires.

Halting the fighter modernization program already underway will have significant force protection and recruiting and retention consequences. Current operational fighters like the F-15 cannot be further modified to encompass new stealth technologies and other capabilities needed to protect pilots from advanced surface to air missiles and air defenses. The F/A-22 is the first stealthy fighter/attack aircraft that combines supersonic speed without resort to afterburners (requiring extra fuel), maneuverability via thrust vectoring engines, and the fusion of multi-sensor avionics via-computers enabling pilots to destroy enemy aircraft and ground-based air defenses at greater standoff ranges than an F-15.

Additionally, the F-15 was developed in the mid-1970s and is now over 30 years old. We are deeply concerned that given the already significant downward trend in recruiting and retention the military is facing, cutting this program will send a clear message to our airmen and airwomen that their government feels they can make do with outdated technology.

We urge the Department to re-consider these ill-advised cuts that will negatively affect the future readiness and capability of the United States Air Force and the future security of our country. Additionally, we will ensure this issue receives full debate and consideration during Congressional deliberations over the fiscal year 2006 defense authorization and appropriation bills.

Sincerely,

S/ Senator Christopher J. Dodd

S/ Congresswoman Nancy Johnson

S/ Congressman Christopher Shays

S/ Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro

S/ Congressman John Larson

S/ Congressman Rob Simmons

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