

STATEMENT  
OF  
DAVID W. DUMA  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
BEFORE THE  
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ON  
PRESIDENTIAL REPLACEMENT HELICOPTER – VXX  
APRIL 14, 2005

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement concerning my views on the cost and schedule for the Presidential Helicopter Replacement Program or VXX.

The VXX Presidential Replacement Helicopter program responds to a White House requirement to replace the VH-3 helicopters no later than October 2009. Due to the urgency of the requested availability date, the Department has adopted a schedule-driven, success-oriented acquisition strategy (program schedule attached). The program office acknowledges that the schedule-driven nature of the program leads to high-cost, schedule, and performance risks.

In January 2005, the Department designated VXX as an Acquisition Category 1D Major Defense Acquisition Program that recognizes that replacing the aging and limited capability of the current Presidential fleet warrants urgency, and requires a success-oriented program schedule. The Department also recognizes that system safety, reliability, availability, and security are overriding concerns that cannot be compromised, and will ensure these concerns are adequately addressed. The program strategy approves Milestone B to begin the System Development and Demonstration phase to develop Increment 1 and Increment 2 VXX configurations concurrently. The strategy authorizes procurements of:

- Three off-the-shelf aircraft for early flight familiarization and testing.
- Five Increment 1 Low-Rate Initial Production aircraft.

Additionally, the Increment 2 Low-Rate Initial Production quantity was set at 10 aircraft.

I support the established and long-standing policy of “fly-before-buy.” This approach allows deficiencies discovered in early testing to be corrected efficiently by design changes prior to production and fielding. The VXX acquisition strategy is not an example of “fly-before-buy.” Low-rate initial production aircraft will be designed and procured before the results of realistic mission-oriented operational test and evaluation are available. The decision to procure the ten Increment 2 Low-Rate Initial Production aircraft will be made before Increment 1 performance in operational test and evaluation is fully understood. As a result, all but the final eight aircraft (production lots 1 & 2) will be procured before operational test results will be available.

The current acquisition strategy will likely necessitate retrofit of some number of the procured helicopters to incorporate final configuration changes in the operational presidential support fleet of 23 aircraft. Such retrofit will likely incur schedule delay and cost increases. I believe that the VXX acquisition program would benefit by shifting to an event-based strategy that allows time to perform early operational testing, followed by deficiency correction, and then production.

I am committed to working within the Department to achieve an event-driven strategy which will enable fixes identified in Increment 1 to be incorporated into the Increment 2 Low-Rate Initial Production aircraft design and production.

To date, the VXX Test and Evaluation Master Plan has not been approved by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. However, I applaud the significant effort by the Commander of the Navy Operational Test and Evaluation Force to plan a detailed set of operational test and evaluation objectives that will be closely integrated with developmental test events conducted by the integrated contractor/government test team.

I am committed to ensuring that the operational and live fire survivability test and evaluation efforts are adequate and conducted in accordance with longstanding policy and Title 10, U.S. Code.

Attachment:  
VXX Program schedule

# VXX Program Schedule

