last week, and some were very successful, and China and Turkey and other countries. They have been able to eradicate them. We are not on a mission that will not succeed, but we must get the resources there. We must get the equipment there. We must aid our allies, who are willing to be partners in this effort, especially in Colombia, where we have a great leader in President Pastrana, who is trying to get his Nation back together.

I submit, and it was confirmed by witnesses at our hearing today, the only reason the rebels are now in Sweden and in Europe and talking about serious peace settlement in Colombia is because the threat of the resources finally reaching there. It is sad that even until a few weeks ago, the three Black Hawk helicopters that we had requested, and again, Members saw the documents here back some 4 years, 5 years ago, that finally arrived the end of last year, and it is unbelievable, they arrived without proper armor.

Today we were told that the armor that was sent does not fit on all of the helicopters, so some of these are sent in nonstrategic but support missions. Some are up and flying, but not in the proper fashion that Congress had intended.

In addition, the ammunition and mini-guns and other resources to get to the national police, who are anti-narcotics officers in Colombia, still have not all arrived. It is unbelievable, but I believe confirmed that half the ammunition was inadvertently delivered during the Christmas holidays to the loading dock at our State Department; again, the gang that cannot seem to shoot straight in getting this drug situation under control.

Again, it is not rocket science. Almost all of it is coming from Colombia. Seventy-five percent of the heroin coming into the United States, over 75 percent of the cocaine is now sourced there. Some of it does transit through Mexico, but if we stop it at its source cost-effectively, we do not have to have 10,000 Border Patrol people there.

Even today I see they are becoming threatened with bounties put on their heads by these reckless drug traffickers.

Again, we can win this. We can win it cost-effectively. We have to learn by our mistakes. It must be an international effort, a little bit of dollars, with the help of our friends, the European communities willing to put in more resources, because they also are becoming more victimized, just like the United States; with a little help to Colombia and with a little help from both sides of the aisle, not making the mistakes, joining in and saying, we are going to get those resources there, we are not going to wait.

If this was Kosovo and we could not get the helicopters to Kosovo, it would be a disaster. If we could not have gotten the ammunition and the resources to our troops, and these are not our troops we are trying to supply, in the Gulf War, we would have had a disaster there.

So we can start a real war against narcotics. We have thousands of lives at stake. Out there tonight in our districts are young people who are overdosing. Three or four times those who are killed in Columbine will die tomorrow as a result of drug overdoses in our community, and hundreds more, as the drug czar said today, will die from the scourge each day across our Nation.

So we have a great responsibility to get our act together, make certain this administration fulfills the will of Congress, and that we get resources to those who can help us bring this situation under control.

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FALSE STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE F/A–18E/F SUPER HORNET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend, the gentleman from Florida, for the presentation that he just gave. I would add a couple of things to it; first of all, that in Kosovo the KLA Albanians have been described by the CIA and FBI as some of the most ruthless and dangerous cocaine and heroin dealers in the world. In Europe they are the major threat, and we are starting to see the function of that now. They operate out of Kosovo. They have a clear hand.

Secondly, in Afghanistan, another area in which the terrorists are selling drugs to support the mujaheddin, the Hamas, and recently in Israel, that Israel is having trouble with right now in Lebanon. So I would thank the gentleman for his presentation. The lives of our children and our grandchildren are at stake, and the information that he brings I have read not only in several articles, but have been briefed by our classified sources.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk on something a little different tonight. On February 7, a member of the other body delivered on the Senate floor what has become an annual tirade of false and misleading statements concerning the Navy's number one weapons system procurement, the F–18E/F Hornet. He concluded at best that the aircraft is not better than the current airplane, and probably is worse, and it is enormously more expensive than continuing with the present FA–18C and D models.

Mr. Speaker, I have two models here. The first is the F–18 C/D. The second is the F–18 E/F. What I will show in this next hour is the extreme advantage of the latter over the C/D model, and why it is necessary that the Navy has its number one aircraft for the future.

Secondly, the gentleman from the other body has never served in the military who was talking about these two aircraft. He has a zero rating from all defense groups and agencies. He stated his own opinion as fact, and I would say that the gentleman in the other body is extremely factually challenged. The gentleman has never served in the armed service. The only credential that he has is that he is liberal.

I say this based on my knowledge and experience in carrier aviation, and on intelligence briefs presented to me recently by the Department of Defense and by the Central Intelligence Agency. It concerns, first, the current, and more importantly, the projected military threat that will face our defense forces over the next decade. We need to take seriously a look at not only what the current threat is that we could face, our men and women in all services, and secondly, it concerns the weapons we are planning to acquire to defeat that threat.

When we look at the threat, we look at the future threat 10 years, 20 years, even 30 years from now, it should be determined on what direction we go with the planning and the aircraft and equipment that we buy presently, and the training of the men and women in our Armed Forces.

I would say that many of the Members have received this intelligence briefing. I would encourage the gentleman from the other body to do so. The classified briefings can bring insight into what those actual threats are and the direction that we need to go.

□ 2030

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, what brings DUKE CUNNINGHAM, a Republican from California, why should I be such another expert, other than the gentleman in the other body?

First of all, I served 20 years in the United States Navy. I was a Top Gun student. I was a Top Gun instructor. I was commanding officer of the adversary squadron. I was on the Defense Authorization Committee, and I am now on the Defense Committee on Appropriations and sat in on many of the Intel briefings. I would tell the gentleman that I have flown the F–14. I have flown the Air Force F–15. I have flown the F–16, the F–18C/D and the F–18E/F that we are talking about. I have flown in the Middle East, and I flew in Israel in 1973 and 1974. I have flown against enemy aircraft in combat, and I have shot down many of those aircraft. I have also flown against them in peacetime to judge their capabilities, and I helped develop the tactics against those particular aircraft.

The gentleman in the other body has none of these capabilities or none of this knowledge.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BILIRAKIS). The Chair would advise the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) that he should refrain from characterizing the position of an

individual Senator, even if not mentioning the Senator by name; and the gentleman should also refrain from urging an individual Senator to take a particular position.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I would particularly recommend that the gentleman in the other body get the briefings on potential threats posed by forces by Iran, Iraq and Libya, in North Korea and China. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that the Speaker look at the Russian SU–37 with the AA–10, the AA–11 and AA–12 missile, because in today's fleet, if our pilots in the F–14, the F–15, the F–16 or current F–18 meet this SU–27, with the Russian missiles and their jammer and their radar, our pilots will die 95 percent of the time.

That is not spin, Mr. Speaker. That is fact.

I would recommend these briefings on the capabilities of carrier battle groups to meet and defeat these particular threats and the tactics involved in them, which I deal with on a daily basis. The capabilities of carrier aviation today center on two tactical aircraft, both of which I have flown, the F–14 and the F–18 Hornet. The Navy has upgraded them throughout the years. As they buy an airplane, new equipment, new electronics, new stealth capabilities, are placed on those aircraft.

The F–14 airframe was designed in the 1960s, and the F–18 in the 1970s. We have added many things to those aircraft, trying to keep them with the capability to meet those threats that I have previously talked about.

When the F–14 was designed, the Navy desperately needed a high speed interceptor. Right after the Vietnam War, Mr. Speaker, there were many that thought that our only threat was going to be Backfire bombers coming in from the former Soviet Union. We trained many of our pilots as interceptor pilots, although the Navy Fighter Weapons School, which we know as Top Gun, continued to learn how to fight the F–14 and F–18 in what we commonly call a dog fight.

Counterfleets of projected cruise missiles were also a threat coming in not only at the carriers but our battleships and our troops embarked, and our aircraft were designed to meet that particular threat. That performance dominated the design at the expense of reliability, maintainability, survivability, and versatility.

The F–14 today is very expensive to maintain, and each cost per flight hour is an extreme mode.

In early mid-1970, Congress, in its wisdom, directed both the Navy and the Air Force to develop their next generation of tactical aircraft. The F–18, and for the Air Force the F–16; and if we want to look I do not have a model, Mr. Speaker, of the F–16 but if we want to look at the Russian-built MiG 29, it is very similar. As a matter of fact, the Soviets stole the plans of our F–18 and our F–16 and devised this particular airplane called the MiG 29.

They also stole the plans for our older F–111 and created a MiG that is very poor performing. They stole the wrong plans, because in my opinion the F–111 could not shoot down the Goodyear Blimp, but they stole the plans and thought it would be a good airplane because it had variable swept wing like the F–14.

All of these aircraft have served our Nation well and they have been equally successful by our forces, by both our men and women in Desert Storm and other areas. But they are limited.

The aging fleet of the F–14 Tomcats, many of which are over 20 years old, Mr. Speaker, are difficult and expensive to maintain because they were designed before modern survivability. We call it VSEVO.

Mr. Speaker, we know it as stealth capability, and those techniques have been developed over the years since the F–14 and the F–18 models were developed. Like the F–14, the early models of the F–18 were growing long in the tooth; and even the most recently built F–18C/D model are no longer able to keep up with the evolving threat, i.e., the SU–27, which is a Russian variant, the SU–35 and SU–37, which are projected Russian threats in the next few years, along with their AA–10, AA–11, and AA–12 missiles, which are superior to our best missiles in a dog fight.

The limitations of the F/A–18C/D Hornet and the ability to handle that threat is a serious threat today, Mr. Speaker. They performed well in Desert Storm and Allied Force and Desert Fox. All I can say is we are very, very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the SU–27, with the Russian add-ons were not available in Kosovo, because our long-range stand-off weapons, our aircraft would not have known, both in the intercepted and the dog fight, that they were coming, and our pilots would have suffered at the hands of those pilots.

That brings me to my major premise, Mr. Speaker, the necessity of acquiring a larger, longer range, more survivable, and more capable F–18E/F Super Hornet. Many people fought off the B–2 and its production. The B–2 was one of our most successful aircraft in Kosovo. It had no losses. It launched out of the United States on missions, and if we look at the target damage in Kosovo impacted most of the target damage itself.

The F–22 is a future airplane by the Air Force. It will be able to meet the threat of the SU–35 and SU–37 in the future, but at the same time we are debating in Congress the additional cost of that particular airplane. If anything, we need to double the numbers, reduce the unit cost and proceed with the test and evaluation so we can take a look at introducing that particular airplane capability against the future threat of Russian and Chinese airplanes.

Let me give another example, Mr. Speaker. I went to Patuxent River, Maryland, and as a test pilot I am able to fly aircraft. A few weeks ago, General O'Ryan was flying the F–16. I was able to be in the F–15 and doing the test results on the new F–22. We did high angle attack work, which means a very slow high angle, high claim rate speed, and also the VSEVO test, which is the performance and acceleration test of different aircraft.

In this particular airplane, the F–18E/F where I flew at Patuxent River, Maryland, let me give you the difference in capability. In Vietnam, I was shot down on my 300th mission in combat, after engaging some 22 MiGs on the 10th of May 1972 and shooting down three of those MiGs. On other occasions, I had to ingress a target at very low level, 50 feet to 100 feet. I would pitch the plane that I was flying, at that time was an F–4 Phantom, and I would go over the ground looking at my map and hitting certain positions on that map within seconds.

At a given time, I would pop the airplane up, roll to take a look at that target and quite often it took a long time to find that particular target, Mr. Speaker. At that time, I was very vulnerable to those gunners while I am looking for that target climbing.

With this particular airplane, when I flew at low level, some 600 knots at 50 to 100 feet above the ground, it handles very capably and that is another reason that the airplane is good because one can take a young Jonathan Livingston Seagull that has never set foot in a jet before and they feel very, very comfortable with the handling qualities of this aircraft.

I flew it in at 600 knots, popped up; and before I got there, miles away from the target, I was able to lock that target up with two different systems, which I cannot discuss because it is classified. I not only locked up the bridge with two systems, I knew exactly where it was so when I pulled up, all I had to do is roll, put the airplane on the target, drop the ordnance and then break out, which limited the amount of vulnerability that I was vulnerable to enemy aircraft fire and/or other aircraft.

So that in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a big advantage over the F–18C/D, or even the F–14.

Early F–18s, the A, the B, the C and then later the D models, have been strengthened over the years to withstand stress of recovering back aboard a carrier, with more and larger weapons. We have added sensors to these older F–18s, countermeasures, advance systems, black boxes, electronics; and the Hornets have become even more densely packed and heavy.

What does this mean, Mr. Speaker? It basically means that this older model of the F–18, because we have added so much weight, there is no more capacity to add weight to this airplane and, secondly, that when we add the weight on there, we cannot grow anymore. All the new systems to combat these aircraft that I previously mentioned, SU–27, SU–35, SU–37, all their missiles, all of their capabilities, I have no more

room to put it in this airplane. It is full. The F–18E/F has room to grow over the next 20 years, which is a big advantage.

I would ask the Speaker to put himself in the Sea of Japan, or put his son or his daughter in an aircraft, coming aboard in the Sea of Japan in the dead of winter, a pitching deck, bad weather, and you can only land on that carrier one time because the increased weight of this aircraft as it has grown throughout the years, you are limited in the amount of fuel that can be brought back aboard. If you do not land that airplane on the flight deck, you have to go back up through the bad weather, you have to find a tanker and be able to tank. If you drop the weapons that you are carrying, you could drop half a million dollar or million dollar weapons off of that airplane so you can back aboard the carrier, and that is a waste in itself and cost millions of dollars, especially if you are early on in a war when it has not started but yet you carry ordnance just in case the battle begins.

The worst part of this, Mr. Speaker, is that our young men and young women, if they miss that carrier deck in those kind of conditions, in the Sea of Japan or areas where the weather is bad and cold, if they have to eject, the pilots wear today a survival suit, but they have less than 10 minute survivability time; and chances are our helicopters and our search-and-rescue efforts will not find them before they die.

□ 2045

The aircraft that we are talking about that the gentleman in the other body talks so badly about that says it was not better, I can bring four of these heavy duty weapons back aboard and I can carry enough fuel for 15 passes at that carrier deck in case there are problems with the deck, if there are problems with the weather or even the tailhook itself on this particular airplane. So it means survivability to those men and women in those circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in Vietnam, we had problems bringing Rockeye, which is a bomblet, back aboard the carrier and quite often we did not have time to stick around on the target to develop that particular weapon because we ran low on fuel. F–18E/F extends the range of the current F–18 by drastic amounts, not only giving the pilot time on target but survivability in an area which could be very hostile to enemy threats.

Another advantage of the new F–18E/F because the defense budget has been so low and because many of the deployments to Somalia, to Haiti, to Iraq four times, to Bosnia, to Kosovo, to bombing aspirin factories have cut off the defense budget; and we have not had the advantage of the particular airplane to allow it the capabilities that we need in this particular airplane.

What this aircraft offers is it can itself, if we take off these weapons off this pylon, the airplane is built as an air-to-air tanker. It can give us an additional thousand pounds of fuel, which will allow us to go over a thousand miles, where the F–18/CD has as little as 370 miles of range.

So the gentleman in the other body that spoke about the capabilities of this older CD being worse than the current F–18E/F that we have coming up is just not the case. I would tell the gentleman that he is incorrect, and I would tell him to get not only, I do not know if I can do that, if I can advise him to take briefs, Mr. Speaker, but if he does not, he should. I do not know if I can advise him or not under the rules. But if he is overly concerned that the Super Hornet will cost 13 percent more than the older airplane, I would ask him to think about the capability of this aircraft not only in cold weather in saving our pilots, the ability of this airplane to be a tanker so that this one will not run out of fuel, but the Hornet in studies has been shown that this airplane will die in combat four to one to this airplane. Why?

First of all, you have the endurance and the range to go to the target not direct but in a route that avoids enemy threats. Secondly, if you are engaged by enemy threats, you have the fuel to get back to the carrier, where, with this airplane, just to use an afterburner will cause you to run out of fuel or could cause you to run out of fuel. This additional 13 percent in cost will save four aircraft to one in combat with different studies. And I think that is very critical.

Mr. Speaker, I took this airplane up at Pax River and also flew it. Because the aircraft itself, when it was being initially tested, had a condition that they call wing drop. When you take this aircraft, generally at speeds in which you are trying to close in very close to the enemy, and we will not shoot another F–18, let us at least use a Russian airplane, if we are trying to close in on another airplane close aboard, what was happening, something that they did not look at in a test bed was a condition called wing drop.

If you would pull under certain PSF, different G-loadings, different altitudes, then what happened is the air flow over the wing of this aircraft would cause one wing to depart other and then the wing would drop, which is a tactical disadvantage and could even cost you that fight.

Engineers went in. I flew the airplane at 40,000 feet; and I then flew it at 35,000 feet, and I then flew it at 30,000 feet trying to duplicate the wing drop after the engineers had fixed it. We could not duplicate it.

But during this time, the point that I would make, my chase pilot flew at 25,000 feet just saving their fuel while I did all of these other tests using in and out of afterburner, under high-G loading not only in military power but maximum power, burning fuel at a very high rate, this aircraft was sitting at 25,000 feet at maximum endurance just saving its fuel. Even with all of that, I ended up with 3,000 pounds more fuel, Mr. Speaker.

What does that mean? It means that our pilots, if they are engaged, will have a much higher capability not only of survivability but the ability to engage the enemy.

On May 10, 1972, I was engaged by 22 MiG–17s, 19s and 21s over North Vietnam, Mr. Speaker. I cannot tell you about the ensuing dogfight. I was fortunate enough to shoot down three of those 22 MiGs. But, in that, you use a tremendous amount of fuel; and if you have got 100 or 200 or 300 miles to return to your carrier or to your airfield, the Air Force, then you have a good chance of losing that aircraft.

The F–18/C model has done well in the past, but yet its stealth capabilities that we have added today to that particular airplane were not developed until later on. The new aircraft, the F–18E/F, gives us a much higher chance of survivability in the intercept. The Russian radars are very large. They had jammers that are very difficult to actually see where this particular airplane is, Mr. Speaker.

What the F–18 does is that his missiles, the bad guy's missile, is better than our missile today, not in the future but today. We cannot only see where he is not, we cannot see where he is. And what happens is that he fires a missile at me if I do not have stealth capability and our pilots die. Now, that is a pretty serious thing, Mr. Speaker, whether you are sitting in that cockpit or you have a family member that is sitting in that cockpit.

What this stealth capability in this new F–18E/F does is that enemy, with his powerful radar, cannot see our aircraft, or, at least, by the time he sees it, it gives us time to lock up his airplane and to fire our AMRAM or other type missiles, which gives us the capability to shoot him down and to have him come back in a ball of fire instead of us.

Now, that might be not significant to many people, Mr. Speaker, but it is for the men and women that we ask to fight our battles.

I would say to the gentleman in the other body, when he says that the older F–18C/D is better than this airplane, he is wrong. When he says it has longer range than the newer airplane, he is absolutely wrong. When he says it has better stealth capability, he is wrong. And when he says it is an airplane that we should not buy, Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, the gentleman is wrong.

We need to look very carefully at the future, Mr. Speaker, and to see what technologies we have to put into those aircraft. I have a real concern. If the gentleman in the other body wants to take a look at a system that could have problems in the future, this country, the United States of America, has never built, Mr. Speaker, an airplane that is inferior to what the enemy

threat is. We are not going to put our men and women up in the air with an airplane that we think that they cannot survive in. We just have not done that in this country.

Even during World War II, when the Japanese Zero was superior to many of our aircraft, industry came about and developed superior aircraft, like a P–51, like a P–38, like other aircraft that turned the tide of that war. And we cannot do that today. But I would tell my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that I have a real concern with an upcoming aircraft, not the F–18E/F, but with an aircraft called the Joint Strike Fighter.

The Joint Strike Fighter, the U.S. Air Force is going to replace its F–16, which is an attack aircraft. The U.S. Marine Corps is going to use it as a vertical takeoff, what we call a jump jet, to replace the ailing Harrier.

The United States Navy is selected to take a low-end or a low-cost variant of that Joint Strike Fighter. And we must take a look before we buy or develop that aircraft first, is its design going to allow our pilots in all the services to win in combat? Can they meet that future air-to-air threat and air-to-ground threat? Can they fight those future threats?

I do not want a fair fight, Mr. Speaker. There is no such thing as a fair fight when you are a fighter pilot, and there are no points for second place because second place means you are captured or you are dead. And I do not want to build an airplane that I cannot defeat an enemy or that my children or your children cannot defeat that enemy.

I hope the Joint Strike Fighter program succeeds. Battle group commanders will surely welcome it in year 2012 to begin sharing on its flight deck with the F–18E/F. But I will continue to argue to the best of my ability from now until that speculated time that we need to be equipping our airwings with the F–18E/F and ensure that the other systems that we put our pilots in can meet that threat.

This year, in Congress, we debated the F–22. The F–22 will meet the threat of the SU–35 and the SU–37, which is the future aircraft. Right now, in my opinion, it is one of the few airplanes that will meet that threat. Unfortunately, the airplane today is $187 million a copy. The research and development is over $20 billion dollars. And the cost of the electronics, hopefully, will not go up.

If we do anything, Mr. Speaker, we should double the buy of the F–22. Because what they did is, with Lockheed and the Air Force, they cut the buy of the F–22 in half. When you take all this research and development money and you put it on a lesser number of airplanes, each of those airplanes, when you pile those additional costs, it is more than if you had a whole bunch of them. So, in the future, I think we need to double the buy of the F–22, not only for the cost but the fact that when you get into an engagement, it is like a food fight, you may have some airplanes over here and some other here and some behind you that are in the threat, and if you only have two air superiority fighters, you may not be able to cover everybody that is in trouble. And it is another issue that is coming up before this Congress. I hope we can resolve this, as well.

It is not just because of the superior ability to bring expensive smart weapons back to the ship or because spectacular improvements in survivability. It has a wealth of additional enhancements, the F–18E/F.

I will confine myself to three, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the increased range. Secondly, the airborne tanking capability. And C, I mentioned briefly, the capability for growth. The combat radius of the Super Hornet carrying 4,000-pound weapons, that is a lot of bombs on an airplane; and the drag, like when you stick your hand out of a car, that is called drag, but the drag on those aircraft is tremendous.

That airplane can go 500 nautical miles, compared to only 370 miles of this aircraft. Every battle group commander since the F–18 deployment in 1983 has recommended this extra range.

The GAO reported highly critical initially of the F–18 at the time and it emphasized the limited range of the F–18C/D. I criticized it myself. And they asked us to continue buying the A–7, which was a much older airplane with less capability, and I disagreed with that.

At least one of these same GAO analysts that was responsible for the recommendation now states that the extra range of the Super Hornet is unnecessary and that the previously unsatisfactory range of the original Hornet is adequate.

□ 2100

Mr. Speaker, this absurd and contradictory analysis is all the more unsettling when combined with the fact that in the days of the original Hornet, the Navy had A–6 tankers to enhance the range of our aircraft for in-flight refueling. These vulnerable aircraft have since been retired, leaving the aging S–3, which has very limited tanking capability, as the only tanker for the fleet today.

Fortunately, the F–18E/F unlike the F–18C/D was designed to carry fuel tanks. You see all of these stations underneath can be loaded with fuel tanks. What is the advantage of that? It can fly at speeds and altitudes most suitable for the combat mission unlike slower, less maneuverable ones. Let me give an example.

In Vietnam, we used to go up and try to tank behind a C–130. It was so slow that I used as much burner getting the two or 3,000 pounds of fuel out of that airplane than I got. I burned more fuel than I actually received, but at least I was heading toward the target. This aircraft can act as a tanker and tank at the same speed as the other F–18s and be just as maneuverable. This gives the battle group commander the capability to launch one or two Super Hornets, each carrying two smart missiles, accompanied by an additional Super Hornet configured as a tanker, and after a single refueling outbound leg, the missile-armed aircraft will strike the enemy targets a thousand miles away and return, a thousand miles and return. Remember, this airplane was 370 miles only. So again the gentleman in the other body was wrong and misinformed.

The big part of this airplane is the maintainability. I have spoken about the F–14 and its capability. If you have an aircraft that is a tanker and also can act as a fighter, it gives you another fighter airborne. Plus you do not have to have all the other maintenance people to maintain a totally different airplane, to have different parts on the carrier because this aircraft is the same as the airplane you are going out to fight with as a tanker. The parts are common, they are easier to keep, and that way you also keep more aircraft up on that carrier deck making your readiness much, much higher.

With two-thirds of each launch serving as strike aircraft and the third serving first as the tankers and then as combat air patrol between the battle group and the enemy, tremendous new capabilities and flexibility and alternatives accrue to the battle group commander.

My final attribute of the F–18E/F is its capability for growth. The reason the F–18 A, B, C and D models have remained effective is that we have built up those systems since the early 1980s and they have been upgraded every 2 years, incorporating new radars, mission computers, forward-looking infrared sensors, and weapons employment capabilities as I noted earlier. This capacity for further modernization has been exhausted, and there is no more room. Not only is the current F–18C/D already too heavy to incorporate any additional systems, without considerable redesign there is no space to locate such systems or black boxes, as we refer to them in the military.

Likewise, there is no additional electrical power or cooling capacity to accommodate the new equipment. So in short, Mr. Speaker, the old aircraft cannot keep up not only with the threat but the modernization necessary for our men and women to win in combat and to complete their mission. The F–18E/F has, like its predecessor the F–18A/B did in the day, the access of electrical power, cooling capacity, and cubic space to accommodate 20 years of growth and therefore will be able to incorporate new sensors, countermeasures and weapons still on the drawing board. One of the advantages is that the high technology of the new F–22, the Joint Strike Fighter as it develops, will be able to use those same weapons systems, those same radars in this aircraft and exchange them because there is plenty of room for

growth, up to 20 years, which should be just about the service life of the F–18E/F before we go to the Joint Strike Fighter and whatever comes next.

I began these remarks with the opinion that they are the most important of my career. I believe this because I feel that the F–18 is essential to the preparedness and success of carrier aviation and naval air power projection for the next 20 years, Mr. Speaker. As events in both the Arabian Gulf and in the Adriatic Sea have borne out recently, our land-based tactical assets are not always welcome on otherwise friendly real estate. Quite often, we will have to engage it with a battle group or a carrier air battle group. That, combined with the Air Force, the Marine Corps and the Navy, in joint exercises and joint combat, our troops should be able to withstand those enemy threats.

But I do not think there is anyone on either side of the aisle or the gentleman in the other body that would have our men and women engage an enemy in a system where they knew that they could not win and they would either die or be shot down. The engineer and manufacturing development phase is complete. The operational evaluation is complete. The airplane is ready. It is ready to put to the fleet.

Back in 1992, the Navy presented its $4.8 billion estimate for this phase in FY 1990 dollars. The Navy and the contractors have come in below those costs. Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Northrup Gramine, Raytheon, General Electric aircraft engines have brought the program in well below the cost estimates, and it is a superior aircraft, Mr. Speaker. Congress also specified that the F–18 production costs not exceed that of most F–18C/Ds by more than 25 percent. This aircraft came in at 13 percent the cost.

Frankly, I have been a little skeptical of some years ago to whether the F–18E/F could live up to its billing and I was wrong. It has. I was skeptical that the radars would not meet the threat but it has. For the preceding 2 years an annoying, relatively minor anomaly has shown up in certain combinations of speed and altitude, and I addressed that. It is called wing drop. That has been completed and finished by our engineers, not only not at the expense of our stealth capability nor our range as you would think that you have to hang something else on the airplane. At the end of an exhaustive process, the fixes were finished, the wind tunnel tests are done; and we are ready to buy this airplane for the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps if they so choose.

I would be comfortable in this airplane, Mr. Speaker, fighting against the threats that we have today. And the threats that we have tomorrow we will have to upgrade this aircraft as well. The Navy's most successful initial sea trials on board the U.S.S. *Stennis* CVN–74 in January 1977, the dual F–18E/F is virtually identical to the front and rear cockpits and can be flown in training with our student pilots. This airplane is one of the easiest aircraft I have ever flown to bring aboard or take off on an aircraft carrier, making it user friendly for our young pilots as they enter the fleet. That is important as well, Mr. Speaker.

Eight production Super Hornets have been delivered to Fleet Readiness Squadron 122 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, where the cadre of instructor pilots is unanimous in its approval of how well the Super Hornet performs day and night and under most grueling conditions. It can be conducted aboard a ship within a test range of shore or in simulated combat fights.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD a Commander Operational Test and Evaluation Force, COMOPTEVFOR, released the results of the OPEVAL, specifically that the aircraft was found to be operationally suitable and operationally effective. The highest grade attainable in a test of this type or ever from an aircraft from the United States. They also recommended the aircraft for fleet introduction.

I would say to the gentleman in the other body once again, he is wrong. Boeing Super Hornet awarded the NAA Collier Trophy, Washington, D.C., the National Aeronautic Association announced today, Mr. Speaker, that the Boeing F/A–18E/F Super Hornet has been selected to receive the NAA Collier Trophy recognizing the top aeronautical achievement in the United States for FY 1999. That in succinct order, Mr. Speaker, is why that I say the gentleman in the other body, if he wants to man up in one of the older airplanes, I will man up in the new one, and he will die in a fireball all tensed up.

2–11–00—BOEING'S SUPER HORNET AWARDED NAA'S COLLIER TROPHY

WASHINGTON, DC.—The National Aeronautic Association announced today that the Boeing F/A–18E/F Super Hornet has been selected to receive the NAA Collier Trophy recognizing the top aeronautical achievement in the United States for 1999.

The Boeing Company, the Hornet Industry Team, and the United States Navy were recognized for, ''designing, manufacturing, testing, and introducing into service the F/A–18E/F multi-mission strike fighter aircraft, the most capable and survivable carrier-based combat aircraft.''

In announcing the selection of the winner, NAA President Don Koranda commented, ''The selection of the Super Hornet as the 1999 Collier winner is an excellent example of the technical achievement and teamwork of America's aerospace industry.''

The NAA's Robert J. Collier Trophy, established in 1911, is awarded annually, ''For the greatest achievement in aeronautics and astronautics in America, with respect to improving the performance, efficiency, and safety of air or space vehicles, the value of which has been thoroughly demonstrated by actual use during the preceding year.'' The trophy, on permanent display at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, is considered the greatest and most prized of aeronautical honors in America.

The Boeing F/A–18E/F Super Hornet is a flexible, multi-mission aircraft capable of performing a variety of tactical missions including air superiority, fighter escort, close air support, day/night precision strike, and all-weather attack. It was designed to replace three Navy aircraft, the A–6 Intruder, the F–14 Tomcat, and the earlier model Hornets. In addition, the aircraft will significantly increase an aircraft carrier battle group's capability to independently carry out sustained perations in support of national interests.

The F/A–18E/F has greatly increased performance, efficiency, and safety over the Hornet and has also reduced the maintenance requirements with 42 percent fewer parts than its predecessor. The aircraft has 25 percent greater payload, three times the ''bring-back'' to the aircraft carrier, five times more survivability, a 40 percent increase in range, and 17.3 cubic feet of growth volume for future systems.

In 1999, the Super Hornet completed the most thorough and challenging operational evaluation in the history of naval aviation. Its test program was a unique partnership between the Hornet Industry Team and the Navy that used a fully integrated team to conduct developmental flight and ground testing concurrently from a single location. During its ''Test and Evaluation'' phase, the F/A–18E/F has flown 6,876 mishap-free hours, including 2,917 hours in 1999. As it entered service in November, 1999, the Super Hornet exceeded all Navy and Department of Defense operational requirements. In addition, Congress approved a multi-year procurement demonstrating confidence in the program.

Additional evidence of the success of the program is illustrated by a number of technical ''firsts.'' The Super Hornet has an unlimited angle of attack that provides exceptional maneuverability in combat, fly-by-wire controls and Full Authority Digital Electronic Engine Control (FADEC), and a flight control system that automatically compensates for damage or failure. Its documented performance makes the Super Hornet the most versatile, capable, and survivable strike fighter aircraft in the world.

Formal presentation of the trophy will take place at the annual Robert J. Collier Presentation Banquet, which will be held on Wednesday, May 3, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, VA. For further information, please visit NAA's web site at www.naa-usa.org, send an e-mail to awards@naa-usa.org, or call 703–527–0226.

The National Aeronautic Association is the National Aero Club of the United States and the nation's oldest aviation organization, founded in 1905. Its primary mission is the advancement of the art, sport, and science of aviation and space flight. NAA is also the United States representative to the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, the 88-country organization that oversees all aviation and space records established worldwide. NAA consists of more than 100 member organizations. NAA oversees many of aviation's most prestigious awards and trophies and is a member funded, not-for-profit association.

The Commander Operational Test and Evaluation Force (COMOPTEVFOR) released the results of OPEVAL, specifically that the aircraft was found to be Operationally Suitable and Operationally Effective (the highest grade attainable from the test). They also recommended the aircraft for fleet introduction.

Press release follows:

''SUPER HORNET'' OPERATIONAL EVALUATION RESULTS ANNOUNCED

The Navy announced today the results of the F/A–18E/F Super Hornet operational

evaluation (OPEVAL). The OPEVAL report awarded the best possible grade to the Super Hornet, calling it ''operationally effective and operationally suitable.'' In addition, the report recommended the aircraft's introduction into the fleet.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jay Johnson, stated ''The F/A–18E/F Super Hornet is the cornerstone of the future of naval aviation. The superb performance demonstrated throughout its comprehensive operational evaluation was just what we expected and confirms why we can't wait to get it to the fleet!''

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine (VX–9) at China Lake, Calif., flew 1,233 hours in over 850 sorties and expended more than 400,000 pounds of ordnance in the Super Hornet during nearly six months of flights. The 23-member aircrew tested the aircraft in a complex variety of tactical missions representing the operational arena.

The Navy's Program Executive Officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs, Rear Adm. Jeffrey A. Cook commented, ''This is the best news the Navy's carrier forces have received in a long time. It will ensure that throughout the next twenty years the fleet will be capable of countering the evolving threat. My congratulations to the Navy's Operational Test and Evaluation Command, the men and women of VX–9, and the entire naval aviation systems team.'' The purpose of the OPEVAL was to test the aircraft in a realistic fleet setting to determine its operational effectiveness as a weapon system, and its suitability to be maintained and operated by the Navy. No new deficiencies were found and the report validated the aircraft's superior capabilities.

''I'm really excited about the results,'' said Capt. James B. Godwin III, F/A–18 program manager, ''and we got the best grade possible from OPEVAL—operationally effective and operationally suitable. This report confirmed that the Super Hornet is a very mature product. We have been recommended for full fleet introduction.''

The OPEVAL report specifically cited the aircraft's key enhancing features—growth, bringback, survivability, range and payload—as qualities relative to current fleet operational capabilities. The successful completion of OPEVAL continues the Super Hornet along the road to a milestone III decision, and then approval to start full-rate production and multi-year procurement.

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CRITICAL TIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to take a special order at a very critical time in the peace process in Northern Ireland. I have asked a number of my colleagues to join me tonight, but at this late hour, I am not sure that they will. But in the event that they do, I would like to yield them time, because so many of us have for so long worked so hard to help support this fairly difficult and ''fairly difficult'' would be an understatement, this extremely difficult process.

The news today is that the British Government has reimposed its sovereignty over Northern Ireland. After about a 2-year process of working and compromise and difficult negotiation, an agreement was reached and the Northern Ireland government took control of its own destiny in December of this past year.

Now, because of a crisis that has been precipitated over the issue of disarmament, the British Government has reimposed its will and has re-extended its authority over Northern Ireland. There is a question, Mr. Speaker, over the constitutionality and the legality of that action, but nonetheless it is fait accompli and home rule has been taken back away and Britain is now again in control of Northern Ireland governmentally.

That is a tragedy. After all these days and months and weeks of hard work and prayer and negotiation, we are back almost to where we started from. Reg Empey who was a unionist leader under David Trimble who is the Unionist Party leader, said today that the entire agreement now must be renegotiated, not just the issue of decommissioning or disarming but the Patten Commission which determines the reforms in the police, and the police is a major issue in terms of civil rights and justice in Northern Ireland, they say that will have to be renegotiated.

The cross border agreements between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland would have to be renegotiated. The Parades Commission, which oversees the licensing, the authorization of these parades that occur between and among the two traditions in Northern Ireland, that will have to be renegotiated.

This makes it next to impossible to get the genie back in the bottle. David Trimble, the first deputy or prime minister of this new government, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his actions in this. He has taken many chances to make this process go forward. Against great opposition within his own party and at certain times maybe today he leads a minority of the Ulster Unionist Party in support of the Good Friday Agreement. Nonetheless, his decision to tender his resignation prior to the completion of the Good Friday Agreement has precipitated this crisis.

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It was a reaction to his own internal party strife, there is no question, but in order to make this work, it requires that all the leaders lead from the front, and it is pretty obvious that the rank and file of the party are in control right now.

Seamus Mallon of the SDLP party, who is the second in the government in a multi-party government, has said it was a mistake for Great Britain to take power back, to put the duly-elected government on the shelf. I agree with him. But, again, it is fait accompli. It has happened. So Mr. Mallon would like all the parties, the British, the Irish Republic, the political leaders of Northern Ireland, and I think the leadership of this country, to reengage quickly and resolve this and close the gap as quickly as possible.

Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, said at the beginning that he questioned the legality of Great Britain's action, and also the logic and common sense of this action. We have entered into a void, and no one knows how to come back out. There is no legal framework, there is no guidepath, there are no maps to getting us out of this quandary we are in in Northern Ireland.

David Irvine, the leader of the Progressive Unionists, said this is far more dangerous than anyone knows. Those words, Mr. Speaker, are chilling when you consider the 30 years we have just come through in Northern Ireland.

This has great meaning to the American public. Millions and millions and millions of Americans claim their heritage beginning in Ireland. This has been watched with great interest and great support among the American public at large, among the Members of Congress of both parties, by our President, who has shown great leadership, and by Senator George Mitchell, who has provided the glue to make this stay together.

So now we are at a point where all the parties, all the players, have pretty much laid their cards out on the table. The IRA, the Irish Republican Army, they had declared a cease-fire 5 years ago; 5 years ago. There has been no breaking of that cease-fire, there has been no sectarian violence perpetrated by the Irish Republican Army. They have not responded to Protestant attacks on Catholics, Loyalist attacks on Republican Nationalist citizens in Northern Ireland, and there have been many. There have been many murders, and we have read about them, but they have not responded. They have shown great discipline.

They agreed to participate in the International Commission on Decommissioning. They made public statements that the war is over, that they support the political institutions, that there is nothing to fear from the IRA in this peace process. They have shown support, they have shown discipline, they have supported peace, they have engaged in it, and they have engaged in negotiation.

The latest statement by the IRA, albeit too late to prevent this from happening, made a very clear statement, understood clearly by the British government, the Irish Republican government, the political parties in the north and in this country, that they were committed to a process with clarity and definition and time lines.

Unfortunately, they have had a penchant throughout this process of saying just enough a little bit too late, and, in this case, it gave the nihilists, the anti's within the Unionist Party, a reason to close the deal and break off the deal.

It is terribly unfortunate. Mr. Mandelson, the Secretary of State for the Blair government in Northern Ireland, has done a good job. He just