

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ON

**AVIATION ROTARY WING PROGRAMS
IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST**

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Wittman, Ranking Member Norcross, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 President's Budget Request for Army Rotary Wing Aircraft Acquisition and Modernization Programs. On behalf of the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Christine E. Wormuth, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, General James C. McConville, we thank you for the invitation to join you today and look forward to a productive discussion.

Army Aviation is a key element of the Joint, multi-national, and inter-organizational team. Aviation provides critical capabilities to maintain superiority over our adversaries by increasing lethality and survivability of the Joint/combined arms team, providing enhanced mobility into and within the theater of operations, and enabling unprecedented situational awareness and battlespace integration. Army Aviation is the cross-domain solution for Army and Joint Land Force Commanders to simultaneously create and exploit relative advantages. As part of the land component operating in the lower tier of the air domain, Army Aviation is a decisive capability in domain interdependence – operating in the nexus between the air, ground, and maritime domains to enhance the survivability and lethality of the combined arms team. Army Aviation's ability to see, strike, move, and extend is critical to our ability to fight and win in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO).

RESOURCING ARMY MODERNIZATION

Major investments in new airframes and technology are necessary to achieve overmatch against near-peer competitors. Our focus on modernization comprises two parallel lanes of execution – modernization of new platforms and capabilities, and targeted modernization of the current fleet. We remain deeply committed to maintaining the modernization momentum of the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) portfolio comprised of the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA), Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA), Future Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (FTUAS), and Launched Effects to

deliver the Army of 2030. We also remain keenly focused on our Enduring Fleet – making prudent investments to address safety, obsolescence, and fleet ‘right-sizing’ during a period of transformational change. This resourcing strategy requires a synchronized effort to provide the best capability to our soldiers and commanders on the ground in support of the Joint/combined arms team.

In FY 2024, the President's Budget Request totals \$39.2 billion for the Army's Research, Development, and Acquisition (RDA) program, which includes \$23.4 billion for Procurement and \$15.8 billion for Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E). Aviation RDA includes \$3.0 billion for Procurement and \$2.0 billion for RDT&E. These resources are balanced between investments for FVL modernization capabilities, ongoing production, and targeted modernization of the current fleet.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 AVIATION KEY INVESTMENTS

Specific modernization efforts in the Army Aviation portfolio include the following programs:

FARA. FARA is Army Aviation's top modernization priority and is integral to dominate the lower tier of the air domain ($\leq 300'$) and effectively execute reconnaissance and security missions and penetrate and dis-integrate adversaries' Integrated Air Defense Systems in Joint All-Domain Operations. FARA will fill the capability gap for light weight attack/reconnaissance. It provides significant advancements in aviation technology over the capability once provided by the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior. It will provide Combatant Commanders with greater tactical, operational, and strategic capabilities through significantly increased speed, range, endurance, survivability, and lethality. As part of the current FARA Competitive Prototyping effort, two vendors are nearly finished with vehicle development and are on track to fly in FY 2024. Weapons system design efforts are occurring in parallel, and the initial design review will occur in early FY 2024. In addition, the program is on track to execute Milestone B and award the Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) contract in FY 2026.

FLRAA. FLRAA will provide power projection from relative sanctuary with transformational range, speed, mobility, and payload over current Army and U.S. Special Operations Command aircraft. It will provide the capability to rapidly converge ground forces to achieve mission objectives and then rapidly disperse to increase the lethality and survivability of the Joint/combined arms team. Additionally, FLRAA reduces the demand for strategic air lift and maritime transport requirements in the Indo-Pacific theater, and it will significantly enhance the Joint Force's intra theater aeromedical evacuation and sustainment capabilities.

The Army is using the adaptive acquisition framework authorities (Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) transitioning to Major Capability Acquisition (MCA)) to deliver FLRAA on an accelerated schedule with appropriate acquisition oversight. The Army executed a down select this past year based on the Source Selection Board's thorough review and analysis of proposals. The Source Selection Board, comprised of a comprehensive set of subject matter experts from the Requirements Community, Contracting, Logistics, Engineering, Testing, and Program Management – determined the successful proposal based on best value to the Army. The Army awarded the FLRAA base contract in December 2022 to Bell Textron, Incorporated, for the development of two virtual prototypes (via MTA) and options to execute a Milestone B decision in FY 2024 (via an MCA).

FUAS. FUAS funding supports the prototyping and development efforts on Launched Effects and FTUAS. Launched Effects are a central component of the FVL ecosystem, providing forward stand-in lethal and non-lethal effects through advanced teaming of manned and unmanned platforms. Launched Effects improves operational reach, survivability, and lethality for both the enduring and future platforms. Funding also supports the development of the expeditionary and runway-independent FTUAS platform, which will replace RQ-7 Shadow within Brigade Combat Teams. A contract was recently awarded to five competitors to compete for the development of the FTUAS program of record. A final down select to one vendor is estimated to occur in FY 2024.

Apache. The Army continues to field AH-64E v6 to the force and execute planning for targeted modernization of the fleet to ensure its relevance in LSCO. This program is designed to renew the current Apache fleet by incorporating current technologies and a new airframe to extend the aircraft's useful life and make it one of the most technologically advanced weapon system on the battlefield.

Black Hawk. The H-60 Black Hawk constitutes the largest fleet of helicopters in the Army's inventory and serves as an aviation workhorse on the battlefield. Modernization within the current fleet is focused on two aircraft variants, the H-60M and the H-60V RECAP helicopter. Deliveries of the H-60V continue to increase while H-60M deliveries remain stable. Our FY 2024 H-60M Black Hawk efforts primarily focus on the continued procurement and fielding of both UH (Utility) and HH (MEDEVAC) variants of the H-60M along with UH variants of the H-60V. In line with accelerated modernization, we completed divestment of Army National Guard H-60As in FY 2022 with the remaining H-60As scheduled for divestment in FY 2024, both ahead of the forecasted schedule. Future Black Hawk procurement and deliveries support the divestment of our remaining enduring H-60L assets.

Lakota. The LUH-72B9 Lakota fielding to the Army National Guard is complete. The aircraft that were displaced by this fielding are being cascaded to the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Novosel, Alabama, to conduct training operations.

ITEP. The Improved Turbine Engine Program (ITEP) will power the FARA and is key to improving Black Hawk and Apache ranges, payloads, and loiter times over the current 701D engine. ITEP increases lethality with the capability to operate with full mission payloads in high altitudes and hot temperatures (6k/95 degrees), reduces fuel consumption, and improves reliability/maintainability. The FY 2024 funding continues EMD including testing, airframe integration design reviews, and live fire planning.

Chinook. The FY 2024 funding request supports EMD activities for the CH-47F Block II program, digital cockpit support and sustainment of the CH-47F Block I fleet and ongoing MH-47G Block II production for our Special Operations Aviation Forces. The Army completed fielding all CH-47F Block I units in FY 2020. The CH-47F fleet is one of the Army's youngest and most modern fleets. The Army remains committed to working with our allies and partners to pursue opportunities to maintain the health of the Chinook industrial base. The Army also expects to make a decision on its cargo fleet in late 2023.

Aviation Mission System and Architecture (AMSA). The Army is advancing open system architecture to support rapid introduction/updates of capabilities, enable interoperability, enhance aircrew safety, increase battlefield lethality, improve aircraft survivability, and provide cross-platform portability. This provides Army aviation a scalable digital backbone with distributive processing and aligns to Modular Open Systems Approach standards, allowing Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground convergence and the rapid integration of evolving technologies. In addition, the Army continues to develop the Assured Position Navigation and Timing capability that will enable M-code and allow Army Aviation to fight and win in a highly contested or denied environment.

Survivability. Aircraft survivability is critical to Army modernization and readiness efforts to equip the force and maintain dominance. The Aircraft Survivability Portfolio provides advanced sensor detect capabilities and advanced laser defeat capabilities with the Common Infrared Countermeasure (CIRCM) system. Designed for rotary wing, tilt-rotor, and small fixed-wing platforms, these capabilities ensure Army aviation is able to dominate a complex and continuously changing environment to keep pace with threat systems.

Reform. The Army is validating Multi Domain Operations concepts with the use of high-fidelity modeling and simulation; and by conducting increasingly complex Joint experimental and demonstration events, such as the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE) and Project Convergence (PC). The Army is building upon lessons learned from PC22 and EDGE22, which included Soldier touchpoints for early

opportunities to validate technologies and requirement concepts, as well as progressive efforts connecting Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) to the lower tier of the air domain by extending the reach and lethality of the FARA ecosystem to accelerate joint kill chains in all-domain operations.

Army aviation has also been instrumental in implementing the Army's revised intellectual property (IP) approach, established in late 2018 (Army Directive 2018-26, "Enabling Modernization through Management of Intellectual Property"). The Army's IP approach stresses identifying and planning for IP needs early in the lifecycle of a system, working with industry to develop custom license agreements, negotiating early in the process to ensure competitive prices, and communicating openly with industry throughout the process. Program Executive Office Aviation is also participating in the Program Management Resource Tools (PMRT) pilot program. PMRT is designed to capture and manage program data across the enterprise to enable real-time analysis and data-driven decisions. This effort will help to ensure senior Army leadership has the information necessary to make informed decisions across Army programs, while providing a modern management tool for program managers.

CONCLUSION

It is clear the security challenges of tomorrow will be met with the Rotary Wing Aircraft Acquisition and Modernization Programs we develop and execute today. As adversaries will continue to invest in technology to counter or evade U.S. strengths and exploit vulnerabilities, it is critical that the Army Rotorcraft portfolio receive timely, adequate, predictable, and sustained funding to maintain overmatch.

We can assure you that the Army's senior leaders are working hard to address current challenges, as well as the needs of Army Aviation in the future. We are doing so with affordability as our watchword, meeting the equipping needs of our soldiers while we endeavor to remain good stewards of our Nation's resources.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, thank you for your steadfast and strong support of our outstanding soldiers, civilians, and their families.