

Oppose Additional F-22s Paid for with Environmental Cleanup Funds

June 23, 2009

Dear Representative:

Please support any amendment to the FY10 defense authorization bill, H.R. 2647, to eliminate funds for advance procurement of 12 F-22 Raptor fighter jets and restore the money for environmental cleanup.

Defense Secretary Gates requested four additional F-22 fighters in the FY09 Supplemental Appropriations Act, completing the fleet at 187 planes and ending production. Money to purchase those final four aircraft has already been appropriated. We oppose the additional twelve aircraft sought by the Committee in the FY10 defense authorization at a cost of \$369 million for FY10.

The funds for F-22s were taken from money intended for cleanup of nuclear weapons sites, and we believe this is unwise. More than six decades of U.S. nuclear weapons research, testing, and production activities have left dozens of Department of Energy sites contaminated by radioactive and hazardous waste. The contamination threatens workers, communities, and the environment, including major water supplies. Cleaning up that contamination should remain a priority for Congress and the administration. Inadequate funding in 2010 can lead to missing legally obligated cleanup milestones, allows contamination to spread, and can result in additional spending to pay fines and penalties. Funding shortfalls in one year also require additional spending in future years.

The \$369 million sum is misleading; the total cost for purchase of the twelve F-22s will be about \$2 billion. This is \$2 billion for twelve airplanes we do not need.

The F-22 is the most advanced air-to-air fighter in the world. Yet the F-22 has only limited air-to-ground attack capabilities, which makes it unsuitable for today's counterinsurgency operations. The F-22 was designed to fight next-generation Soviet fighters that never materialized and it has never been used in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

The F-22 has no known enemy; there are no other planes that could threaten its supremacy in air-to-air combat. The United States already has 187 F-22s on hand or on order, which is a silver-bullet force that is more than adequate to deal with any contingency. In fact Secretary Gates said even if he had \$50 billion more to spend he would not buy any more F-22s.

The Air Force leadership itself no longer supports continued production of the F-22. Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz have publicly withdrawn support for this unneeded weapons

platforms saying, "The time has come to move on." Not only is the F-22 not in the budget prepared by Robert Gates and the Defense Department, it is also not on the Air Force's list of un-funded requests.

Ending procurement of the F-22 will not affect jobs. Lockheed Martin employs 24,000 workers in producing the F-22. This number will be reduced to 11,000 by the end of 2011 when the economy is expected to be on more stable ground. These losses will be dramatically offset by jobs created by the increase in F-35 production.

The argument that continued production of the F-22 is needed to protect our industrial base is also unfounded. This argument overlooks the fact that the Obama administration's proposed FY10 budget seeks to buy 28 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. Moreover, as Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, notes, the era of producing manned aircraft is coming to an end. He correctly explains that there will be a shift to unmanned aircraft in the future which will need to be designed and manufactured. It is illogical to suggest that ending production of the F-22 means the end of U.S. military aviation innovation and production.

Wasteful spending in this era of an unprecedented budget deficit should not be tolerated. We ask for your help to oppose the addition of \$369 million in the FY10 Defense Authorization bill and your support for returning the money to the Department of Energy's Environmental Management program.

Sincerely,

(signatures in progress)

National groups

3D Security Initiative

Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

Arms Control Association

Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities Action

Center for American Progress Action Fund

Common Cause

Foreign Policy In Focus

Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)

National Priorities Project

NetWorks Productions

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Project on Government Oversight

USAAction

TrueMajority.org

VoteVets

Women's Action for New Directions

Local, State, and Regional groups

Peace Action West/**California**

Tri-Valley CAREs/California

Colorado Coalition for the Prevention of Nuclear War

Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center/Colorado

Georgia Women's Action for New Directions

Women's Action for New Directions of Northern **Indiana**

Greater Newburyport Women's Action for New Directions/**Massachusetts**

Women's Action for New Directions Southeast **Michigan**

Nuclear Watch **New Mexico**

Oregon Women's Action for New Directions

Heart of America Northwest/**Washington**