

WITNESS STATEMENT OF

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Before the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress  
United States Senate  
Committee on Armed Services

Hearing on the V-22  
May 1, 2001

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The United States Senate  
Committee on Armed Services

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you as the Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). I look forward to discussing USSOCOM's need for and the benefits of the CV-22, a key future aviation platform for USSOCOM. The CV-22 represents an advanced vertical lift aircraft this Nation can count on to successfully employ special operations forces (SOF) when and where needed.

Since the Desert One tragedy two decades ago, military and civilian leaders have consistently advocated two goals: (1) develop a closely integrated joint team of special operators and (2) provide them the best equipment. The CV-22 represents one of those "best technological means." The CV-22 will expand our ability to conduct our primary, mandated missions for the Nation--counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation. It will ensure our ability to perform strategic reconnaissance, direct action, and unconventional warfare operations for the theater CINCs. Finally, it will enhance our ability to perform coalition support, humanitarian assistance, and other operations around the world.

## REQUIREMENT

Special operations forces (SOF) have long recognized the need for a high-speed, long-range, vertical lift aircraft to conduct precise, low-visibility, penetration missions transporting men and materiel deep into hostile or denied territory during a single period of darkness. The new aircraft must be self-deployable, sustainable, and capable of operating from any airfield or sea-based platform. The most demanding SOF missions require the speed necessary to conduct operations over long distances, all terrain, at night, and in adverse weather. Such an

aircraft requires a robust and upgradeable defensive avionics suite for greater survivability in the face of advanced anti-aircraft defenses. This need has been consistently expressed in several documents, such as the original Air Force Statement of Need and the subsequent Joint Operational Requirements Document.

The current SOF aircraft inventory consists of modified C-130s and a variety of Army and Air Force helicopters which provide tremendous combat capability to the warfighting CINCs. However, none of these combine the speed, range, survivability, and vertical lift capabilities required to conduct SOF missions. The current C-130 fleet has the required speed and range, but lacks the ability to land on unprepared airfields and landing zones used routinely by helicopters.

SOF's existing helicopter fleet is among the most technologically advanced in the world, but lacks the speed and unrefueled range necessary to conduct sensitive missions deep in enemy territory within one period of darkness, or without the requirement of refueling in hostile or denied areas.

The CV-22 alone combines combat capabilities needed on the modern battlefield with speed and range of fixed-wing aircraft and vertical performance of a helicopter. This combination will enable it to fill a niche no other aircraft can approach. Increased SOF mobility in terms of range, speed, survivability, and rapid responsiveness is more critical than ever for meeting difficult operational environments, both current and projected.

Future operations are certain to be more challenging. Forecasts generally indicate that the information agility of any potential adversary will require improved denial and deception efforts on our part. Potential adversaries may also deny us access to operating facilities near their area of operation. These forecasted trends

indicate the substantial and growing need for an aircraft with a smaller logistics footprint, higher speed, and longer range. A platform that combines these characteristics greatly enhances success in tactical surprise against an adversary. In short, we need an aircraft that can operate inside an opponent's decision loop. In a world of high-speed, digital communications, the CV-22 can act as a bridge to that future. The 1993 Cost and Operational Effectiveness Analysis (COEA) of the Advanced Multi-Mission Lift Aircraft (MV-X) said, "...the force mix of USSOCOM aircraft that includes the CV-22 is the preferred alternative..."

#### **PROGRAM**

The clear, strong, and compelling need for a new capability led to the current acquisition program, the SOF variant of the V-22 Osprey. Because of the unique nature and relatively small budget of USSOCOM, normal aircraft procurement concepts either leverage other Service development efforts or modify an existing platform provided by that Service.

A joint V-22 program that would meet SOF's unique requirements was a natural evolution with the United States Marine Corps plan to procure tiltrotor technology as a replacement for their aging helicopters. The opportunity to "get in on the ground floor" of the V-22 development allowed USSOCOM to help shape and craft a vehicle central and critical to future capabilities.

The V-22 program has had technical and operational difficulties inherent in any complex engineering effort. Particularly regrettable are the incidents where lives have been lost. We all feel a profound sense of loss and deep sympathy for the family members and close friends of those who have directly experienced such tragedy.

As such, we consider the actions of the Commandant asking the Secretary of Defense to convene an independent review panel--the Blue Ribbon Panel--a thoroughly appropriate action. USSOCOM hosted the Panel in our headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, and has cooperated with their deliberations via briefings and technical presentations to ensure their efforts are complete.

We fully support the Department of the Navy's "Way Forward" proposal to develop a revised acquisition strategy addressing all the current major concerns of this program.

I recently had discussions with some of the test pilots presently stationed at Edwards Air Force Base, California, where the CV-22 developmental testing is ongoing. While every pilot I spoke to would get back into a V-22 and fly it again, each is primarily concerned about sufficient flight-testing and flight-control software maturity. These issues need to be addressed, and I understand an extensive flight test program and recertification of the software are two major areas of work planned for this program.

#### **CV-22 ENHANCEMENTS**

To meet SOF's unique mission needs, the CV-22 will have improved navigation, communication, mission management, and defensive electronic warfare avionics coupled with increased fuel capacity and terrain following and terrain avoidance radar. Improved navigation will facilitate both the worldwide self-deployability and the independent penetration capability of the CV-22. Enhanced communication capacity will enable dynamic coordination of operations both across a formation and around the globe. Comprehensive mission management equipment will allow instant in-cockpit updates to the tactical situational awareness of special operations aircrews. Advanced CV-unique defensive avionics,

coupled with the MV's ballistic tolerance and other capabilities, will be crucial to the survivability required to operate in denied territory. A layered defensive capability, consisting of reduced probability of detection, active and passive infrared and radar-guided countermeasures systems, and a high ballistic tolerance provides improved survivability. Finally, the CV-22 will carry a greater fuel load providing greater range without refueling.

The CV-22 variant of the V-22 will be specifically tailored to bring the battle to an adversary's back yard. Employing speed, range, and agility, special operators will use the CV-22 to strike quickly and effectively when and where least expected. The CV-22 enhancements are designed to ensure access, survivability, and mission accomplishment even in the face of hostile opposition, aided in part by a revolutionary reduction in acoustic signature while in the fixed-wing mode.

#### **OPERATIONAL POTENTIAL**

We must keep firmly in mind that the CV-22 will provide future SOF operators an entirely new weapon system with different capabilities and capacities. This will generate new tactics, techniques, and procedures as well as innovative operational and strategic concepts. This new technology, and its concurrent and innovative tactics and procedures, will transform the current special operations employment paradigm.

As an example, one of the most frequently made comparisons of the CV-22 is to measure its potential for impacting the execution of Operation EAGLE CLAW, the American hostage rescue mission into Iran in 1980. As originally planned, Operation EAGLE CLAW required 35 hours to execute. The low speed and limited range of available helicopters

drove this lengthy mission duration and necessitated forward landings by C-130 refuelers and H-53 helicopters at unprepared locations.

In contrast, had CV-22s been available, they could have accomplished the Operation EAGLE CLAW mission in eight hours with a considerably smaller overall force. The reduction in exposure time, coupled with a smaller footprint, would have provided a higher probability of success.

A more recent mission comparison that highlights the capability of the CV-22 is the Non-Combatant Evacuation (NEO) of U.S. citizens from Liberia in 1996. If nine CV-22s rather than nine SOF helicopters were used, the aviation required to conduct the mission would have arrived at the crisis site in one day instead of two, and 2,000 U.S. citizens would have been evacuated in four days rather than the ten actually required.

Because of its enhanced speed and range, the CV-22 also requires fewer supporting aircraft. CV-22s conducting the Liberia NEO would require only five support/cargo sorties and three tankers, while the helicopters that actually conducted the NEO required 14 support/cargo sorties and two MC-130Ps for refueling.

In summary, using CV-22s for the NEO in Liberia would have resulted in faster response times to the crisis area, an overall quicker evacuation of Americans, required less supporting aviation, and expended significantly less fuel. Improved performance in these critical areas results in increased capability for SOF aviation.

Comparisons to past operations are enlightening and provide interesting data points, but future CV-22 operations are what make development and fielding vital to special operations. No one can say for certain what specific missions will be required, but we have projected numerous approximate scenarios.

For example, we can reasonably expect there will be some natural and man-made disasters requiring rapid delivery and distribution of relief supplies. CV-22s could launch rapidly after notification and head toward the stricken area, proceeding to a secure, stable staging base (or ship) in the disaster region. Fresh CV-22 crews, transported on KC-10s, could launch relief missions as soon as supplies were transloaded from the KC-10 to the CV-22 and the location for delivery determined. A CV-22 could easily carry enough Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) or Humanitarian Daily Rations (HDR), some 6,270 pounds of food, 500 nautical miles to feed about 4,000 people.

There are two driving reasons to use CV-22s in this scenario instead of another aircraft or helicopter. The first is the response time afforded by the CV-22. The CV-22's self-deployability not only gets it to the operation more quickly, but also frees up other airlift assets to transport supplies rather than aircraft. This increases national responsiveness and reduces mission cost.

The second is the enhanced survivability of the CV-22. Those who object to U.S. humanitarian efforts quickly detect our response to a disaster. Then, even the most benign mission can become dangerous to our personnel. The CV-22 will have the defensive countermeasures suite necessary to operate in an uncertain environment with an acceptable margin of safety. There are no survival guarantees, but CV-22 defenses are planned for some of the toughest challenges.

Additional future missions supporting our national military strategy may include key operations during a large-scale conventional conflict. These missions could range from strategic reconnaissance providing "eyes on target for ground truth" to direct action against a weapon of mass destruction buried deep in a hardened bunker. To get



the forces into position for these, or any number of other scenarios, a clandestine infiltration may need to be executed.

Once launched, the CV-22s would fly at low altitude, blacked out for night operations, and avoid populated areas to evade radar/visual detection. Using the best planning methods and available intelligence information would also reduce exposure to enemy radar. Other potential tactics would include launching from multiple locations with each location having only a very small force. The ultimate objective is to avoid detection completely or to achieve tactical surprise and generate uncertainty for our adversaries.

CV-22s can physically perform all of the several hundred potential missions evaluated and enjoy a significantly higher mission survival probability due to information denial, detection avoidance, and self-defense capability.

#### **AIRCRAFT STATIONING**

USSOCOM plans to place CV-22s in four locations around the globe. Training will be based in New Mexico at Kirtland Air Force Base. Kirtland has the support infrastructure and a rich history of training superb aviators for special operations.

Operational CV-22 units will be centered at Hurlburt Field, Florida as part of the 16th Special Operations Wing and will also join existing SOF units in the Pacific and European theaters overseas. These units will become key strategic and asymmetric assets available to our Theater CINCs. Linking this total force structure with the global strategic airlift/refueling capabilities of U.S. Transportation Command will allow special operations to respond within one day virtually anywhere in the world.

## CONCLUSION

We look forward to the day when CV-22s are fielded and ready. USSOCOM anticipates the time when the tiltrotor is in the hands of special operators and maintainers alike, all performing the tasks for which they have trained.

In the past 20 years, SOF's requirement for a long-range insertion and extraction vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft that can operate in hostile or denied territory during one period of darkness has not wavered. We support the efforts of the Commandant to ensure that these aircraft are safe and reliable. There are inherent risks to any new developing weapon system. Our job is to mitigate and manage that risk each and every day. Daily, we send America's sons and daughters into many situations around the world where we simply cannot guarantee that they will be without risk; never does this undermine our moral and professional obligation to try, however. In the short and long term, the CV-22 represents more than just our ability to increase mission capability. Inherently the cornerstone of that improvement is the increased survivability and probability of success for a special operations mission that would employ tilt-rotor technology. As the world has changed, so must we. The CV-22 is a capability we need in order to stay on the leading edge of change.

Thank you.