

From
TITLE X—GENERAL PROVISIONS
Subtitle C—Miscellaneous Authorities and Limitations

Responsibility of the Air Force for fixed-wing support of Army intra-theater logistics (sec. 1029)

The committee recommends a provision that would require the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to prescribe directives or instructions to provide that the Air Force will be responsible for the missions and functions of fixed-wing support for Army intra-theater logistics.

The budget request included \$157.0 million in Aircraft Procurement, Army (APA, line 1) for buying the Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA). The budget request also included \$42.4 million in PE 41138F for Air Force activities related to joint Live Fire Test and Evaluation (LFT&E) and Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) programs, initiating an Air Force mission equipment integration design/development program, buying test aircraft, and engineering, training, and logistics support studies and analysis. The budget request did not include any funding in Aircraft Procurement, Air Force (APAF) for the JCA program.

The Army and the Air Force established the JCA program to correct operational shortfalls to cargo mission requirements, provide commonality with other aviation platforms, and replace multiple retiring aircraft systems. In the Senate report accompanying S. 2744 (S. Rept. 109–254) of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109–364), the committee noted that the appropriate aircraft mix and the number of intra-theater aircraft assets required for this mission had not been determined and had not been addressed in the Mobility Capabilities Study. The Department of Defense has been conducting an Intra-Theater Lift Capability Study and Force Mix Study to identify the right mix and number of intra-theater aircraft assets required, but has not yet produced any results from those efforts.

Whatever those analyses show, however, the more fundamental question is whether this should be a joint program between the Army and the Air Force, or whether this fixed-wing, intra-theater lift mission should be assigned solely to the Air Force.

The committee has heard frequent anecdotes from Army officials about the lack of logistics support they feel has been provided by the Air Force operating the C–130 aircraft in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, when invited to provide concrete examples that would give substance to the assertions, the Army was not forthcoming. Without concrete examples, there is no way to tell if the perceived shortage of support was due to other Air Force priorities, or whether the Air Force operators were fully engaged in supporting the priorities of the overall ground component commander. If there were a pattern of the joint forces air component commander (JFACC) providing support that did not match the priorities of the joint forces land component commander (JFLCC), that would certainly argue for intervention of the joint forces commander to correct the situation. It would not be a persuasive argument that the JFLCC should have his own air force.

Unfortunately, these arguments have a familiar ring—“I can’t count on it in wartime if I don’t own it all the time.” These were among the loudest arguments against making the reforms included in the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

The committee believes that the Air Force is better positioned to provide this type of support in wartime and in peacetime, and believes that the Army would be better served to focus its scarce resources on those missions and functions for which it is uniquely qualified and which are demonstrably underfunded.

The committee, therefore, recommends this provision, a decrease of \$157.0 million in APA, and an increase of \$157.0 million in APAF to continue the JCA program in the current schedule.