

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 9, 2007

The Honorable Gordon England
Deputy Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary England:

As you know, recent media reports have stated that India has agreed to join Russia's effort to develop a fifth-generation fighter. This project called PAK-FA, also known as the Sukhoi T-50, seeks to develop a stealth fighter capable of super-cruise flight and equipped with an advanced electronic scanned radar system. These same media sources speculate that the Sukhoi T-50 is being developed to confront directly the F-22A Raptor. Such reports are especially disconcerting due to the impressive performance of the Indian Air Force during the recent *Cope India* exercises and the propensity of the Russian Government to sell advanced weapons to our potential adversaries. Additional media sources cite China's development, with almost certain Russian assistance, of a similar twin engine, fifth generation stealth fighter known as XXJ or J-12.

No doubt the development of the T-50 and J-12, as well as the deployment of other advanced integrated defense systems, led the Air Force to conclude that 381 F-22As is the minimum number of Raptors required to preserve our nation's global air dominance. Therefore, we continue to be perplexed by the Department of Defense's insistence that only 183 F-22As should be procured. Highlighting this concern is the knowledge that if only 183 Raptors are purchased, this is an insufficient number to provide one full strength squadron of 24 F-22As for each of our ten Air Expeditionary Forces. Equally disconcerting is the recent grounding of our entire F-15 fleet due to concerns over the structural integrity of the aircraft. As you know, this apprehension was raised after the loss of an F-15C on November 2nd.

It is our understanding that three separate reports, commissioned by the Department of Defense, have concluded that in order to meet our national defense requirements a far larger number than 183 Raptors will need to be procured. We appreciate your assistance last year in providing excerpts from the Whitney, Bradley and Brown study. However, as we seek to preserve President Bush's legacy of increasing the capabilities of our armed forces, Congress should have an opportunity to examine thoroughly and consider all of these reports in full. In addition, we also request that the reports' conclusions regarding the minimum number of F-22As to be procured be publicly released.

Of course, any consideration of this subject would be incomplete without your thoughts and analysis. Therefore, we respectfully request that in addition to being provided with the aforementioned reports, and their procurement conclusions being publicly released, that we receive a detailed briefing, before January 15, 2008, on the TACAIR mix required to execute the National Military Strategy through 2020. We also request that during this briefing, the Department of Defense articulate why Raptor procurement should be limited to 183.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hatch

John A. ...

Sally Chambliss

Chris J. ...

James M. ...

James ...