

DoD Certifies Six Acquisition Programs

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WASHINGTON (May 3, 2002—The Defense Department has certified six acquisition projects to Congress under the Nunn-McCurdy Law.

The certification allows the programs to move forward, said Pete Aldridge, Defense Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, during a press roundtable May 2.

The Nunn-McCurdy Law requires the Secretary of Defense to certify that programs with a 25 percent cost increase are necessary for national security. It also mandates the Department put controls in place to get costs under control.

Programs not certified are canceled. The most recent—and so far, only—case of that was the Navy's Area Terminal Defense System in December.

Aldridge said four criteria are used for certifications: Is the program essential for national security? Is there an equally capable, lower-cost alternative available? Are costs under control? Is there management in place to keep spending under control?

He certified all six programs that ran into Nunn-McCurdy limits.

The first is the H-1 helicopter. DoD is "remanufacturing" 280 H-1 replacements for the AH-1 Cobra and for the UH-1 Huey, Aldridge said. The plan calls for the Huey and Cobra to have common engines, tail rotors, and other components. "So there's a great logistics benefit from having commonality of the two approaches," he said, adding alternatives are "vastly more expensive."

Aldridge also certified the CH-47 Chinook helicopter program. "We're going to remanufacture 317 CH-47s for the heavy lift helicopter replacement," he said. "Every alternative was two to three times more expensive."

The LPD-17 Amphibious Transport Dock Ship program is also certified. There are four ships under contract, leading to a 12-ship buy. "Ninety-five percent of the design has been completed," Aldridge said. "Most of the problems are behind us."

Aldridge had to certify the chemical demilitarization program because it's governed by treaty. He said DoD continues to examine alternative technologies to accelerate the process.

The Multiple-Launch Rocket System [MLRS] upgrade program also gained certification. Upgrades include improved launchers, the development of a GPS [Global Positioning System] guidance system, and extended missile range, he said. MLRS is a joint program with Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom.

The last of the six is the Space-based Infrared System-High. "This is the replacement for the current ballistic missile early-warning system with the added requirements for technical intelligence and missile defense," Aldridge said. "This is essential for national security. The alternatives were much more expensive given the state of the current program."

Editor's Note: This information is in the public domain at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news>.