

Pentagon Terminates Crusader Program

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WASHINGTON, May 8, 2002— Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld announced today that he has decided to terminate the Crusader artillery system.

The decision is “not about one weapon system,” Rumsfeld said, but about “a strategy of warfare that drives the choices we must make about how best to prepare the nation's total forces for the future ... We have an obligation to ensure that U.S. forces will overmatch the capabilities of any potential adversary now and into the future.”

The President has agreed to recommend to Congress an amendment to the fiscal 2003 budget request to terminate Crusader and to reallocate the funds to more transformational programs. Defense officials are working with the Army to prepare the details of an amended budget request that will be submitted no later than May 20.

The Army has spent \$2 billion on the Crusader and would have needed another \$9 billion to complete the program. A prototype had not yet been made. Rumsfeld, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, and Army Secretary Thomas White discussed the decision at a Pentagon press briefing Wednesday afternoon.

Rumsfeld said his decision also reflects the reality of “finite resources.”



“It is necessary to make choices, and in doing so, to try to balance among the various near-term, medium-term, and longer-term risks,” he said.

“What you have in this Department,” Rumsfeld said, “is a whole series of competing needs—personnel needs, pay vs. housing; modernization needs, new ships vs. new airplanes; transformation needs, this investment in research and development vs. that investment.”

U.S. defense officials are learning important lessons as they lead the coalition effort against terrorism in Afghanistan. One lesson, the Secretary said, is that defense leaders must be prepared to adapt to an ever-evolving set of challenges and circumstances. Thus, transformation is important.

“Our country needs an Army that is mobile, lethal, and deployable across a wide

range of future contingencies,” Rumsfeld said. “We need joint, integrated approaches to battlefield challenges. We need weapon systems capable of producing the precise and timely destruction of enemy targets.”

Rumsfeld acknowledged that some congressmen might not agree with his decision. “I’ve never seen a decision made that receives unanimous approval or unanimous opposition,” he noted.

“We are going to cancel the Crusader” when the dust settles, he said. “We’re going to make our case persuasively with the Congress. We will persuade as many people as we need, but not all, given the nature of life. It will end up being canceled.”

Wolfowitz said officials preparing the Defense Planning Guidance for fiscal years 2004 to 2009 concluded they needed to shift some investment dollars to prepare the Army to meet future security challenges. “Land warfare will continue to be a critical part of our defense strategy,” the Deputy said. “There is a vital role for accurate artillery in establishing battlefield dominance.

“We want Army weapons to support a transformed Army that is more mobile, lethal, and deployable across a wide range of future contingencies,” Wolfowitz said. “Precision fire has proved to be one of the most transformational improvements in modern warfare.” The Army must invest in innovative technologies and ideas that represent the future of battlefield technology for indirect fire.

The Crusader, Wolfowitz said, was originally designed for a different strategic con-

text. Canceling the program “will make room for more promising technologies that offer greater payoffs and are more consistent with the Army’s overall transformation effort.” The emphasis will be on systems and technologies that provide greater precision, more rapid deployability, and the ability to integrate fires.

“The Secretary has made a decision, and the Army will work hard to execute that decision,” said White, who has asked the Army inspector general to investigate possible inappropriate behavior regarding a lack of support for the decision to terminate the Crusader and a lobbying campaign to save it.

White noted that talking points the Army prepared in support of the Crusader included comments he considered “offensive” and that did not reflect the Army’s position. “When we complete the report, I will discuss it with the Secretary of Defense and appropriate action will be taken.”

In the absence of Crusader, White said, the Army “will put together programs and structure to satisfy that requirement through a different combination of programs.”

“The requirement for indirect fire systems to support the U.S. Army across the full spectrum of conflict—24-7, all-weather, tactical operational ranges, precise and mass targets—continues,” he added. “That requirement is valid and has to be met.”

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