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## **Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays July 21, 2003**

The Joint Strike Fighter, or JSF, could be a model for 21<sup>st</sup> Century weapon system acquisition, promising three-planes-in-one jointness, low risk development strategies and unprecedented international participation. Or, it could fall prey to the same cost growth, schedule delays and inter-service bickering that plagued so many Cold War procurements.

In previous hearings on the JSF program, we examined efforts to implement a knowledge-based development cycle, allowing technology maturity and design stability – not external funding deadlines – to drive the program forward. Today we ask whether international participation and technology sharing are being managed so as to maximize benefits and minimize risks to the Department of Defense's (DOD) largest cooperative program.

At our request, the General Accounting Office (GAO) examined the complex set of relationships between the JSF program and its eight international partners. They assessed how DOD measures expected cost sharing benefits, manages foreign partner expectations and mitigates the risks of significant technology transfers.

Their report, released today, finds the JSF program in need of stronger management and oversight because international participants currently have no requirement or incentive to share in cost growth. GAO also found DOD has insufficient knowledge about contractor activities to anticipate and mitigate risks associated with technology transfers.

In meeting our national and global security obligations, collaborative programs with allies offer the potential for common doctrine, shared training and far greater operational integration in combat. That level of collaboration also demands greater access to sensitive defense technologies than we are accustomed. It also may demand technology transfers at a pace and volume our current laws, regulations and management systems cannot yet handle safely.

Others in DOD, and defense ministries in other nations, are watching the JSF for signs that collaboration is worth emulating in other programs. For the Joint Strike Fighter to fly as the new standard for efficient, affordable, truly joint acquisition, management of international participation and technology transfers must be improved.

Today, witnesses from GAO and the Department of Defense will discuss these important issues, and efforts to strengthen management of the Joint Strike Fighter program. We welcome them, and we look forward to their testimony.