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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0922

February 29, 2012

COMMITTEES:

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INVESTIGATIONS, OVERSIGHT,
AND REGULATIONS

CONTRACTING AND WORKFORCE

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1060 Air Force, Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to express my concern about the actions of the U.S. Air Force as they relate to the Light Air Support contract issued in December, and request a meeting with you and your staff at earliest convenience.

Yesterday, at the House Armed Services Committee hearing on your agency's budget request, you announced that the Air Force plans to set aside this contract. Given the Air Force's strong defense of its selection and the already completed review by the Government Accountability Office, this is nothing short of a stunning reversal of position by the Air Force. Most significantly, it raises serious questions about how the Air Force plans to provide critical capabilities to our forces on the ground in Afghanistan in an expeditious manner.

The safety of our men and women on the ground in Afghanistan and the security of our nation depend upon an Afghan military that is capable of defending against the Taliban and other extremist organizations. A light air support capability is essential to this objective. In light of your announcement yesterday, I respectfully request answers to the following questions at a meeting in the next couple of weeks:

- What is the Air Force's plan for getting the light air support capability in-theatre as expeditiously as possible?
- How will the Air Force maintain the high standards set forth in the initial RFP, which were based on the necessary and critical requirements of the LAS mission, given that you previously identified technical shortfalls with the offering of one of the competitors?
- Does the Air Force plan to move forward with the existing competition so as to not waste the significant taxpayer dollars already invested in the evaluation of the competing aircraft?
- What steps will the Air Force take going forward to ensure the integrity of your own source selection process as well as to maintain the faith of the companies that compete in this process and the Americans who count on you to conduct a fair, open, and cost-effective process?

The road to providing U.S. commanders in Afghanistan with the light air support capability they urgently requested has been paved with numerous unnecessary delays. These delays are endangering our security, wasting taxpayer dollars, and prevent us from putting Americans to work building these aircraft. I hope that the Air Force has a plan for minimizing further delay and mitigating the adverse affects of this latest action.

Because of the seriousness of these recent developments, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your staff in the next couple of weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Director, Josh Grodin, at Josh.Grodin@mail.house.gov, should you have any questions regarding this request-my staff is standing by to accommodate a meeting. Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this request.

Steadfast and Loyal,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen B. West". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allen B. West
Member of Congress

AW/jg

Cc: Speaker of the House John Boehner
Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon