



Highlights of [GAO-05-390T](#), a testimony to before the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

# TACTICAL AIRCRAFT

## Status of the F/A-22 and JSF Acquisition Programs and Implications for Tactical Aircraft Modernization

### Why GAO Did This Study

The F/A-22 and Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)—two of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) major tactical aircraft fighter programs—are intended to replace aging tactical fighter aircraft with highly advanced, stealthy aircraft. The two programs combined have a potential future investment of more than \$240 billion.

Later this month, GAO plans to issue comprehensive reports on the numerous setbacks each of these programs has experienced since they were initiated and their effect on the F/A-22 and JSF business cases. This testimony highlights key concerns in the F/A-22 and JSF programs and discusses the implications of these concerns on DOD’s overall investment strategy for modernizing its tactical fixed wing aircraft.

### What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations in its two tactical aircraft reports to be issued later this month. For the F/A-22 program, GAO is reiterating its 2004 recommendation for DOD to establish a new business case—one that justifies the continued expenditure of funds on the F/A-22. For the JSF program, GAO is recommending that DOD establish an executable business case that is consistent with best practices and DOD policy regarding knowledge-based, evolutionary acquisitions, before the program moves forward.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-390T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-390T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Allen Li at (202) 512-4841 or [lia@gao.gov](mailto:lia@gao.gov), or Michael J. Sullivan at (202) 512-4841 or [sullivanm@gao.gov](mailto:sullivanm@gao.gov).

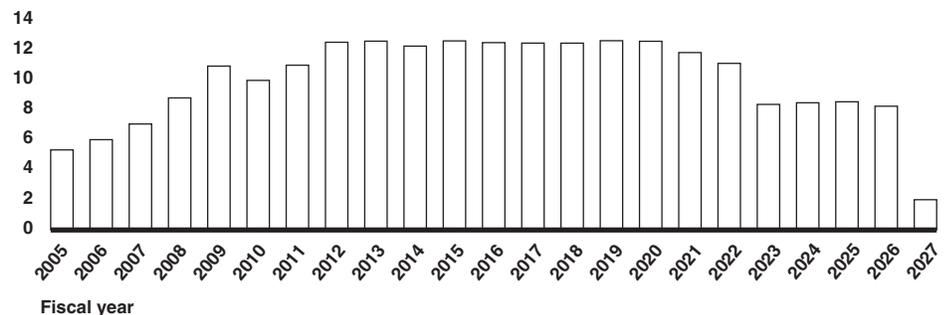
### What GAO Found

Significant changes in the F/A-22 program have severely weakened its original business case. Since the F/A-22 program began in 1986, new threats emerged and mission requirements changed; to keep the F/A-22 viable, the Air Force has planned for large investments in new capabilities. Significant delays and cost increases have affected affordability, reducing planned deliveries from 750 F/A-22 aircraft to fewer than 180. The recent budget decision to terminate procurement of the F/A-22 after fiscal year 2008 and the prospect of additional funding cuts also have significant implications for the program’s viability and modernization efforts.

JSF’s original business case, established when the program began in 1996, is unexecutable. The cost estimate to develop the aircraft has increased 80 percent, operational capability has been pushed out 2 years, and expected acquisition quantities have been cut by 535 aircraft. The JSF program is approaching key investment decisions that will greatly influence the efficiency of the remaining funding—over 90 percent of the \$245 billion estimated total program costs. This sizable investment greatly raises the stakes to meet future promises. While DOD has been working to resolve early design and performance problems, continuing program uncertainties suggest DOD could use more time to gain knowledge before it commits to a new business case and moves forward. To reduce the risk of further cost and schedule growth, any new business case must include an acquisition strategy that adopts an evolutionary, knowledge-based approach to product development. Currently, the JSF program plans to make key production decisions before critical knowledge is captured.

**JSF Program’s Annual Funding Requirements from 2005 to 2027**

Dollars in billions



Source: GAO analysis of DOD data.

Taken together, the status and problems in these two programs have broader implications for the DOD tactical fixed wing aircraft modernization program, raising questions as to whether its overarching goals to reduce average aircraft age and ownership costs while maintaining the force structure are now achievable. The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review provides an opportunity for DOD to assess needs and plans and to weigh options for accomplishing its tactical aircraft goals.