

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter programme could face cost increases

at airforce-technology.com/news/newsf-35-joint-strike-fighter-programme-could-face-cost-overruns-says-pogo-5934922

Sep 26 2017



The Project on Government Oversight (POGO) has revealed that provisions of \$700bn-worth defence authorisation bills could increase the risk of cost increases for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter programme.

In a letter to the Armed Services committees, POGO stated that the language used in the bills could improperly restrict the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation's (DOT&E) ability to evaluate combat effectiveness of new systems by prohibiting new testing that compares legacy systems against new ones.

The new language could immediately have an impact on previous Congressional legislation prohibiting the retirement of any additional A-10s until the currently planned operational testing of the F-35 versus A-10 close support capabilities is complete.

According to POGO, this language could worsen the ongoing attempts to delay or avoid this crucial test.

The independent watchdog in its report stated that the House's version of the National Defense Authorization Act could jeopardise comparative tests conducted against legacy systems.

Both the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act has authorised the purchase of 440 F-35s through a procurement process called Economic Order Quantity, POGO stated.

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orphans'."

The costs associated with the programme are increasing and it is now entering the development and testing stage.

The programme managers are not revealing key information about the safety of F-35s, according to POGO.

The acquisition of F-35s through a normal economic order quantity would have allowed the US Department of Defense to avoid legal requirements established for multi-year procurements to demonstrate cost savings.

POGO has also previously stated that premature rush into production before the completion of development and testing would create 'concurrency orphans'.

Image: Airmen from the 33rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron load a missile-guided bomb into an F-35A Lightning II at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, US. Photo: courtesy of the Project on Government Oversight (POGO).