

Defense Secretary Robert Gates's case against the F136 engine as taken from his written statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Defense Department's Fiscal 2011 budget request, Feb. 2, 2010

JSF Alternate Engine

One of the tougher decisions we faced during this budget process was whether or not to formally add the alternate engine to the Joint Strike Fighter program. It has been the position of this department since 2007 that adding a second JSF engine was unnecessary and too costly.

Over the past year, as part of our thorough review of the overall JSF program, we took a fresh look to determine whether the second engine option had reached a point in funding and development that supported a different conclusion. We considered all aspects of this question and, in the end, concluded that the facts and analysis simply do not support the case for adding an alternate engine program. There are several rationales for this conclusion:

First, even after factoring in Congress' additional funding, the engine would still require a further investment of \$2.5 billion over the next five years.

Second, the additional costs are not offset by potential savings generated through competition. Even optimistic analytical models produce essentially a break-even scenario.

Third, the solution to understandable concern over the performance of the Pratt & Whitney program is *not* to spend yet more money to add a second engine. The answer is to get the first engine on track. Further, the alternate engine program is three to four years behind in development compared to the current program, and there is no guarantee that a second program would not face the same challenges as the current effort.

Fourth, split or shared buys of items, particularly from only two sources, do not historically produce competitive behavior since both vendors are assured some share of the purchase. Another reality is that the JSF is designed to support a wide diversity of military customers, including the Navy, Marine Corps, and overseas buyers, many of whom are unable or unwilling to purchase from two engine manufacturers.

For all these reasons, we are firm in our view that the interests of the taxpayers, our military, our partner nations, and the integrity of the JSF program are best served by not pursuing a second engine.

I believe most proponents of this program are motivated by the genuine belief that a second engine is the right thing to do. And I look forward to engaging the Congress in this discussion and sharing with them our facts and analysis. However, we have reached a critical point in this debate where spending more money on a second engine for the JSF is unnecessary, wasteful, and simply diverts precious modernization funds from other more pressing priorities.

Accordingly, should the Congress add more funds to continue this unneeded program, I will strongly recommend that the president veto such legislation.