Congresswoman Heather Wilson
Chair, Technical and Tactical Intelligence Subcommittee
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Opening Statement

Aerial Common Sensor

October 20, 2005

- Good afternoon and thank you for agreeing to appear today.

- On the Intelligence Committee, most of the programs we oversee are classified, and our questions take place behind closed doors.

- I wish the problems being faced by the Aerial Common Sensor were unique. But they are not.

- The program we are here to review today is just one example of continued problems with the way we buy complicated systems for defense and intelligence.

- We need to upgrade and replace the Army and Navy aircraft that watch and listen to potential and real enemies. They're old and not up to the demands of twenty first century warfare.

- But because we didn't do a good job in setting the requirements, getting different agencies on board early, and developing an acquisition strategy that reduces risk, we won't have the new planes when we want them and it will cost us more to get them.

- While all of us are concerned about what the Army and Navy should do meet this requirement, our committee is even more concerned about bigger issues of which ACS is only symptomatic.

- First, what does this experience tell us about how we need to change the way we buy big systems?

o The outside review requested by the Army and done by the Navy after the stop work concluded that:
  - ✓ The RDT and E costs would be twice as high as projected
  - ✓ The schedule was un-executable
  - ✓ The program might not meet Army/Navy requirements
  - ✓ The government and contractor personnel lacked experience on a project of this size, and
  - ✓ The flight test program was ill-defined

- Second, what does this experience tell us about the need to coordinate and plan across stove pipes as we decide what we need to build for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance?

  o The Navy joined this project late
  o The Air Force is replacing JSTARS
  o Did we have an architecture and a clear definition of roles and requirements? It doesn't look like it
  o How can the services work together to divide up roles and missions or make sure we plan together so that we get the capability we need at a price we can afford.

- I look forward to the testimony today as we look for answers to these questions.