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The Congressional Research Service:
Its Role in Supporting Congress in Defense Acquisition
Presentation at DAU Hot Topic Forum

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Disclaimer

- These views are my own and not necessarily those of CRS or Library of Congress

Outline

- CRS in general
- its role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition
- potential FY08 Navy issues in Congress
- Congress and defense acquisition in FY08

CRS in general

- public policy research arm of Congress
- part of Library of Congress
- legislative branch agency
- sole mission is to serve Congress
- works exclusively and directly for Members of Congress, Committees, and staff on confidential, nonpartisan basis

CRS in general

- provides Congress, throughout legislative process, with comprehensive and reliable analysis, research, and information services that are timely, objective, nonpartisan, and confidential, thereby contributing to an informed national legislature
- also provides Congress with wide range of specialized reference and information services

CRS in general

- Congress created CRS in order to have its own source of nonpartisan, objective analysis and research on all legislative issues
 - separation of powers; comparison with other countries
- first established in 1914 as Legislative Reference Service (LRS)
- renamed CRS by Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970

CRS in general

- one of Congress' 3 technical support agencies
- others are GAO and CBO
- differences in focus
- GAO can make recommendations

CRS in general

- organization
 - 5 interdisciplinary divisions
 - American Law
 - Domestic Social Policy
 - Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade (FDT)
 - Government and Finance
 - Resources, Science, and Industry
 - supported by Knowledge Services Group
 - 7 infrastructure divisions
 - Office of Director, Finance and Admin.,
Workforce Development, etc.

- current size

CRS in general: analysts

- work directly with Congress on daily basis to help Congress identify, analyze, and formulate legislative proposals
- perform in-depth policy, legal, and procedural analyses
- identify and assess policy alternatives and their implications
- assist in framing legislative proposals
- develop quantitative databases and analyses using latest research tools and methodologies
- identify and evaluate new research findings, data, and information sources
- deliver expert testimony before congressional committees

CRS in general: analysts

- their work takes the form of
 - written analytical reports and confidential memoranda
 - educational seminars and workshops
 - in-person briefings and telephone consultations

- reports
 - length
 - updating
 - availability to Congress

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- within FDT, analysts who cover
 - cross-cutting defense issues, such as
 - defense acquisition and contracting
 - defense budget trends and composition
 - military personnel-related
 - defense intelligence
 - military bases and BRAC
 - military forces and programs such as
 - strategic nuclear forces and nuclear weapons complex
 - ground forces (Army and Marine Corps)
 - airpower (all services)
 - naval forces

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- reports on defense programs can feature some or all of following:
 - background information
 - general context; basic program details
 - prior-year decisions; current FY request
 - potential issues for Congress
 - policy issues
 - process issues relating to Congress' role
 - program-execution issues
 - potential options for Congress
 - pros and cons
 - legislative activity
 - additional reading

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- Potential policy issues
 - mission need or requirement
 - cost/affordability
 - acquisition strategy
 - industrial-base impact
- Potential process issues relating to Congress' role
 - authorization (supplemental approps)
 - adequacy of information provided to Congress
 - proposed funding methods
- Potential program-execution issues
 - cost (particularly cost growth)
 - schedule
 - production quality, testing, effectiveness

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- Example: LCS

- potential issues

- cost increase on LCS sea frames

- cost cap on 5th and 6th ships

- total program acquisition cost

- acquisition strategy

- mission packages funded in OPN

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

— Example: LCS

- potential options for responding to cost growth
 - amend cost cap for 5th and 6th ships
 - establish cost caps for other LCSs
 - establish add'l or stricter reporting reqmnts
 - require fixed-price contracts
 - limit expenditures pending actions/certs
 - defer one or more of the FY08 LCSs

- potential additional (more general) options
 - shift some LCSs to BIW and/or NGSS
 - procure a few LCSs, then evaluate
 - terminate program; other littoral investments

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- Example: DDG-1000 and CG(X)
 - potential issues
 - accuracy of Navy cost estimates
 - program affordability and cost effectiveness
 - mission requirements
 - dual ships strategy and incremental funding
 - contract strategy and system integration
 - acq. strategy for 3rd and following ships
 - potential implications for industrial base

CRS role in supporting Congress in defense acquisition

- Example: DDG-1000 and CG(X) (continued)
 - potential options (for DDG-1000)
 - approve program
 - block buy
 - defer 2nd ship to FY08
 - limit DDG-1000/CG(X) to total of 1/year
 - limit DDG-1000/CG(X) to total of 9 to 11 ships
 - procure 2 DDG-1000s as technology demonstrators for future designs
 - start design work on lower-cost NSFS ship or lower-cost cruiser-destroyer

Potential FY08 Navy issues in Congress

- Navy reset costs, including recapitalization items
- Navy aircraft procurement
- LCS cost growth
- nuclear-propulsion for surface ships
- 30-year shipbuilding plan
- adding ships to FY08 request
- shipbuilding industrial base
- shipyard Katrina funding
- submarine design and engineering base
- transfer of mine warfare ships
- China naval modernization; implications for Navy

Also:

- Coast Guard Deepwater

Potential FY08 defense acquisition issues in Congress

- many possibilities
- funding of war-related costs
- contracting irregularities (Iraq)
- LSIs
- cost-plus vs. fixed-price contracts