

VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Fleet Replacement Program

Executive Summary

- The VH-71 replaces existing presidential support helicopters.
- Increment 1 provides four test articles and five production aircraft with reduced capability in the near term.
- Increment 2 provides two new test articles and 23 production aircraft that vary significantly from Increment 1 aircraft.
- The program remains schedule-driven vice event-based.
- The Navy initiated Increment 1 live fire testing.

System

- The VH-71 aircraft replaces the current Marine Corps fleet of 11 VH-3D and eight VH-60N Helicopters flown by Marine Helicopter Squadron One to perform the presidential lift mission.
- The VH-71 is a dual-piloted, multi-engine helicopter based on the AugustaWestland EH-101 (pictured).
- The Navy intends the VH-71 to be capable of operating worldwide in day, night, or adverse weather conditions.
- The communications system will provide the ability to simultaneously conduct short- and long-range secure and non-secure voice, data, and video communications. It can also exchange situational awareness information with outside agencies, organizations, and supporting aircraft.
- Procurement of Increment 1 aircraft will include four test articles and five pilot production (low-rate initial production) aircraft.
- Procurement of Increment 2 aircraft will include 10 low-rate initial production aircraft and eight full-rate production aircraft. If it proves impractical to retrofit the five pilot production aircraft, five more production aircraft will be added at the end of Increment 2 production.



Mission

- Marine Helicopter Squadron One, using the VH-71 aircraft, will provide safe and timely transport of the President of the United States and other parties as directed by the White House Military Office.
- The VH-71 is required to operate from commercial airports, military airfields, Navy ships, and austere sites throughout the world.

Prime Contractors

- AgustaWestland
- Lockheed Martin

Activity

- The DoD is working to restructure the VH-71 program. DOT&E has not approved the Test and Evaluation Master Plan (TEMP) for the restructured program.
- All test vehicles are in the United States; two are undergoing modification, and two are in flight test.
- The integrated test and evaluation program has begun.
- The Navy continues Increment 1 live fire testing in accordance with the approved strategy.
- The Integrated Test Team, including operational test personnel from Marine Helicopter Squadron One, continues to refine and merge developmental and operational test plans.

Assessment

- The LFT&E is progressing as planned.
- The Increment 2, Milestone C decision is essentially a full-rate production decision as most Increment 2 aircraft will be on contract before completion of IOT&E. This is not a “fly-before-buy” strategy.
- Significant differences between Increment 1 and Increment 2 aircraft increase the amount of required testing for Increment 2.
- The current Increment 1 design is being adjusted to control weight. The helicopters at current estimated weight will just meet required range and airspeed.

NAVY PROGRAMS

Recommendations

- Status of Previous Recommendations. The program has made little progress addressing the previous recommendations. Three of the four previous recommendations remain valid and merit additional emphasis.
- FY08 Recommendation.
 1. Reinstitute T&E working group to plan revised T&E program.