SEC. 131. PROCUREMENT OF LIGHT ATTACK ARMED RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT FOR TRAINING FOREIGN MILITARIES AND FOREIGN SECURITY FORCES.

The Secretary of the Air Force may acquire Light Attack Armed Reconnaissance (LAAR) aircraft for Air Force inventory to be used in connection with training foreign military and other security forces.

Section-by-Section Analysis

This proposal would authorize procurement of Light Attack Armed Reconnaissance (LAAR) aircraft to support air component requirements for preparing and equipping U.S. Attack Aviation Advisors to train foreign militaries and foreign security forces. There is no current statutory authority that allows procurement of these aircraft with Air Force appropriations without an attendant Air Force operational mission requirement. The aircraft are to be procured for the primary purpose of training Attack Aviation Advisors to train foreign military and other security force personnel. Nothing in this proposal provides authority to conduct training of foreign military or other security forces. Such training would be conducted under other statutory authorities.

United States Air Force (USAF) personnel regularly engage with foreign partner nations (PNs) worldwide, conducting efforts related to building PN airpower capacity during peacetime and in crisis. This is a fundamental element of the National Security Strategy and will remain a USAF function for the foreseeable future. Currently, USAF does not possess platforms comparable to the mission requirements of most nations requiring USAF development assistance. The LAAR capability will provide the USAF an affordable tool to build partner capacity, and to engage with nascent, emerging, and established air forces worldwide to provide effective airpower for current and future complex operations from peacetime through combat.

The requirement for a LAAR capability is derived from multiple sources. In the mission area “Build the Security Capacity of Partner States,” the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review provided that “the Air Force will field light mobility and light attack aircraft in general purpose forces to increase their ability to work effectively with a wider range of partner air forces.” Secretary of Defense guidance directs strengthening aviation capabilities for training and advising foreign security forces and directs institutionalizing fixed-wing aviation security force assistance capabilities in the general purpose forces (GPF).

The August 2009 Capability Based Assessment (CBA) validated building partner capacity (BPC) and LAAR mission and capability gaps. The CBA found that "USAF aircraft, assets, technology, and [tactics, techniques and procedures] are not ideal for most [partner nations] because of expense and complexity.” The CBA went on to state “US personnel may lack experience and/or currency to train [partner nations] on aircraft that were never or are no longer

in the USAF inventory," and "both the CAF [Combat Air Forces] and the Mobility Air Forces need to include one or more BPC-friendly aircraft types and specialized units designed to provide support to countries fighting insurgencies directly or indirectly."

The Air Force May 2009 Irregular Warfare (IW) Tiger Team identified IW and BPC capability gaps. Specifically, the team found that the "USAF lacks the capability to develop aviation resources in less-developed [partner nations] that do not benefit from the US's high-tech-focused security assistance efforts." The team also found that the USAF component staffs "number-one and number-two requirements" were for light mobility and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; there was a smaller demand for light attack assets.

BPC is a common theme in theater campaign plans and Combatant Command Integrated Priority Lists.

In rebuilding the Iraqi Air Force and the Afghanistan Air Force, there has been a shift from what has traditionally been a mission dominated by special operations forces to one dominated by GPF. This larger GPF role has placed higher demands and requirements on USAF Airmen. LAAR would enable Air Force GPF to meet an increasing combatant commander (CCDR) requirement to build PNs' light attack armed reconnaissance capacity. Air Force needs a cadre of Attack Aviation Advisors that are trained and equipped to execute CCDR's theater security cooperation plans to help PN air forces build, sustain, and implement air power capacities in support of national objectives.

Per Air Combat Command (ACC)'s LAAR Concept of Employment (CONEMP), 15 LAAR aircraft (Total Aircraft Inventory) matched with a cadre of 30 pilots provide the necessary mix of airframes and personnel to establish and sustain a CONUS-based light attack advisor training capability (initial qualification, upgrade, currency, and proficiency training) while enabling 6 to 8 squadron Attack Aviation Advisors to be deployed at any one time, and providing a pipeline for 16-20 Attack Aviation Advisors deploying on long-term BPC temporary duty. This throughput is based on a fully manned and established squadron, ACC's LAAR curriculum (in development), projected PN requirements, estimated aircraft availability rates (as defined by the Aircraft Availability Key Performance Parameter in the draft Capability Production Document), and the eventual basing decision.

Afghanistan's Light Air Support (LAS) program will be the first recipient of the LAAR-trained Attack Aviation Advisors. Air Forces Central Command estimates that the initial Afghan Air Force requirement for Attack U.S. Aviation Advisors will be approximately 6 pilots following receipt of the initial LAS aircraft in 4QFY13; however, final sustained advisor requirements have yet to be determined.

This requirement extends beyond the current operations in Afghanistan. Although the LAS program provides a known demand for LAAR-trained advisors, the USAF Campaign Support Plan (CSP) outlines additional potential demand for the LAAR capability. The CSP outlines Air Force military engagements and security cooperation efforts in support of Guidance for the Employment of the Force end states, combatant commander objectives, and USAF priorities and requirements. In addition to Afghanistan, nine countries are identified for possible

light attack aircraft procurement and engagement. These nine countries span the USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, USSOUTHCOM, and USPACOM areas of responsibility.

The USAF's CSP is further bolstered by formal requests for information (RFIs) on light attack aircraft received through the U.S. Offices of Defense Cooperation and SAF/IA Country Directors. These requests have included inquiries regarding the current USAF LAAR concept and potential aircraft availability. Five of the ten countries indentified in the CSP have submitted RFIs. Requests have also been received from an additional eight countries.

Finally, industry projections offer yet another source of potential demand. SAF/IA has compiled estimates on the global light attack market demand using industry projections. In addition to the eighteen countries mentioned above, industry estimates identify nine other countries as either possessing, or showing interest in possessing, single-engine, turbo-prop, light-attack aircraft similar to the capabilities proposed for LAAR.

In sum, there are at least 27 countries that either currently or potentially present a demand for LAAR-trained Attack Aviation Advisors. The capability provided by the LAAR squadron and its fifteen aircraft will help to address a gap in the USAF's ability to meet Combatant Commander BPC requirements.

An associated mission for the LAAR squadron is support to Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) training. Air Combat Command estimates that the LAAR flying hour program will contain approximately 2,500 flying hours per year on Close Air Support training that can potentially be combined with JTAC training events. During these sorties, LAAR pilots will coordinate with an on-the-ground JTAC who will guide them to their target. A set amount of these interactions is required for JTACs to obtain and maintain their own qualifications, currency, and proficiency. At approximately $1,200 per flying hour, this equates to a $3.0M cost for the LAAR aircraft to fly these 2,500 hours. Using current aircraft such as the A-10 or F-16 to provide the same amount of flight hours for JTAC training events would cost between $18M to $20.5M. Thus, LAAR is capable of potentially meeting a known JTAC training requirement – the JTAC Qualification Course alone is programmed to require 5,000 hours for FY12 (this does not include flying hours needed to meet JTAC proficiency training) – at a cost savings of at least $15M per year over current inventory aircraft.

Budget Implications: The Department of Defense estimates this proposal would cost $265.196 million in aircraft procurement for fiscal years (FY) 2012 and 2013 to purchase 15 LAAR aircraft. Operation and Maintenance (O&M) support estimates $62.307 million over the Future Years Defense Program (including program office, CivPers, costs in PE 0702806F). The 2009 LAAR/Light Mobility Aircraft (LiMA) Cost and Capabilities Analysis (CCA), based on more fully enumerated requirements, established the funding requirement to $319.976 million in FY 2012 and FY 2013, which includes $23.721 million in Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E), $23.11 million in O&M, and $11.713 million in MILPERS. Starting in FY 2012, there will be requirements for pilot, maintenance, and weapons personnel, which are addressed below.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS ($MILLIONS)								
	FY 2012	**FY 2013**	**FY 2014**	**FY 2015**	**FY 2016**	**Appropriation From**	**Budget Activity**	**Dash-1 Line Item**
3600	23.721	-	-	-	-	RDT&E	05	86
3010	158.549	106.647	0.0	0.0	0.0	APAF	04	25
3400	9.070	14.040	12.912	13.150	13.135	O&M	01,04	11, 41B
3500	5.809	5.904	6.045	6.213	6.409	MILPERS	01, 02, 04	A19-2
Total	197.149	126.591	18.957	19.363	19.544	-	-	-
Aircraft Quantity	9	6						

NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AFFECTED								
	FY 2012	**FY 2013**	**FY 2014**	**FY 2015**	**FY 2016**	**Appropriation From**	**Budget Activity**	**Dash-1 Line Item**
ACC	30	30	30	30	30	Mil Pers Off	01,05,06	N/A
ACC	20	20	20	20	20	Mil Pers Enl	02,04,05,06	N/A
SPO	13	13	13	13	13	Civ Pers	04	41B
Total	63	63	63	63	63	-	-	-

The FY 2011 PB planning wedge was not able to take advantage of the CCA and the CONEMP since they were still being developed. The estimates reflected above use three variables: (1) 50 percent Confidence Level estimate from the CCA; (2) CONEMP; and (3) refined warfighter requirements. The added personnel requirement starting in FY 2012 includes the initial pilot cadre and maintenance and weapons personnel who will provide Contractor Logistics Support oversight.

Changes to Existing Law: None.