Close Air Support for Special Operations: Buy American or foriegn?

Description

Considering the economics of keeping jobs at home, if you will, but there is a larger issue: Keeping the capability to fully control the construction and support for military equipment operated by our Military.

As was the case of the recent replacement air refueling tanker, we are heading for another major acquisition for the Military, this time for small, capable turbo prop aircraft to be used in the type of combat we have seen for longer than the decade of the GWOT/â€•Foreign Contingencyâ€• we have been engaged in since the Korean Conflict.. These aircraft are to used in very forward areas in support of the Special Operations teams (Green Berets and SEALs most specifically), where large, modern aircraft, designed to also be superior air combat fighters are:

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1) Too fast
2) Too expensive to operate
3) Need too much support
4) and generally need really long runways.

I received an email with a guest post discussing this matter, where the competitors for the contract are Hawker-Beechcraft (US firm) and Embraer (Brazilian firm) for the USAF Light Air Support Aircraft work.

Pragmatically, Hawker-Beechcraft are already producing the AT-6 Texan II, which is in use as an Air Force trainer. Logistically, the USAF has parts, procedures and trained ground crews, not to mention pilots in this airframe. Whatâ€™s not to like from a bean counter stand point with that, let alone a serious warfighter, who knows itâ€™s the logistics that count after the first load of ammo is expended?

So, hereâ€™s something from Emily to chew on regarding this issue:

> The most basic respect our country can give to Americans bravely serving in the Armed Forces is providing them with the proper tools so they can be prepared and equipped to handle any combat situation. In the past, supplying this need has always been met through American ingenuity. We design, build, and sell the equipment that is used the world over. America has always set the trends in the defense industry.
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> However, recent actions by other countries are in danger of circumventing this competitive defensive advantage that America has held. By subsidizing private companies, foreign competitors have an unfair advantage over American ones. These actions undermine fair competition in the marketplace and put American manufacturing at a disadvantage.
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> We have seen this trend played out over the last several years as the American icon, Boeing competed with EADS, itÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s European competitor to replace the Eisenhower-era refueling tankers for the Air Force. After much public outcry, the Pentagon made the right decision and awarded the contract to Boeing.

> Today, we have another, very similar competition. Hawker Beechcraft, headquartered in the heart of Kansas, is competing with a Brazilian company, Embrear, to build planes that will be utilized in combat zones like Afghanistan. Embrear, like EADS, receives substantial support from the Brazilian government, allowing them to offer an artificially low price for their planes. What is especially troubling is that the Brazilian government has publicly opposed the War on Terror and American efforts against Iran and Venezuela, but now seeks to profit from that same U.S. commitment to military strength.
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> Recently Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and Congressman Mike Pompeo (R-KS) sent a letter to the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee requesting an investigation of the global competitiveness of the U.S. business jet industry. Jenkins remarked:
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> Ã¢â‚¬Å“In a down economy, which has been particularly hard on the aviation industry, it is very concerning that foreign government backed companies have launched new product lines into the business aviation market. It is important that we know whether these foreign companies are receiving illegal governmental subsidies to alter the playing field. The aviation industry is important to both the Kansas and the American economy and we must ensure their competitive edge is not being unfairly diminished.Ã¢â‚¬Â•
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> We need to ask ourselves Ã¢â‚¬â€œ where should our defense spending go? To middle America, to states who are struggling to recover from the recession that has rocked our country? Or to South America, namely a country who calls itself an ally but has shown no support in our efforts to fight terrorism?
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> Boeing won their fight, letÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s make sure Hawker Beechcraft does too.

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Our special operations teams need this capability. In Vietnam, the SEALs and units like VAL-4 worked closely on operations in mutual support.

Call to action: Make a decision on whatâ€™s right for our Military and let your Congressmen know.

Category

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Tags

1. at-6 texan II
2. beechcraft
3. embraer

4. hawker beechcraft
5. turcano
6. USAF Light Air Support
7. VAL-4
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