

Re: Other JSF options

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- *From:* "Kevin Brooks" <brooksvmi@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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"Guy Alcala" <g_alcala@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message news:44A6FF9D.DC26ED06@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Still trying to catch up with old posts (got to stop replying to new threads unless I can avoid getting bogged down in them). Kevin, it seems that we're largely repeating the same arguments and we've reached the point of firm positions of disagreement, so my comments below will be my last post on the points covered. You get the last word, should you wish to reply. I'm a couple of weeks late writing Dave Welsh a reply over on SMN, and that one's going to take a lot of time, references and citations. So I have to avoid getting involved with another marathon exchange with you in the mean time;-)

Kevin Brooks wrote:

"Guy Alcala" <g_alcala@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message news:449A4712.5FF33383@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

<snip stuff there is no use arguing further>

More often, what I've seen them do is offer up options that the services were unwilling to consider themselves for parochial reasons. Would we have won DS with M60A3s instead of M1s? Sure we would.

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The USMC was unsure enough about that at the time that they rushed ex-Army M1A1's into service to replace part of their M60 fleet.

Sure, because the M1A1 undoubtedly provided better protection, had a more powerful gun and was likely more reliable given the respective ages of the tanks.

Let me take these one at a time:

OTOH the M60A3 used a hell of a lot less fuel

Well, yeah...but it was also a hell of a lot slower, and did not provide as good a firing platform for shooting on the move (which we'll return to later...).

and

was easier to transport,

Not really. Tanks are all behemoths when it comes to loading them on HET's and sending them forward; the ten or twelve ton difference in weight between the two was not really significant in this regard.

so we probably could have gotten ourselves there quicker

Extremely doubtful analysis to say the *least*. You need to look at the equipment densities in a heavy division (MBT's make up only a small portion of it), and then tell me that having M1A1's versus M60A3's really affected the TPFDL schedule. Hint--it did not. This is the sort of half-assed "analysis" I would expect to see in a GAO report, not from you... :-)

and supported

ourselves without quite such a huge logistic buildup as we did. Life's a tradeoff.

So you figure that the M1A1's required a significantly greater logistics footprint that affected the overall scheme of operations? Again, look at the densities, Guy. MBT's make up a tiny fraction of the total load of both tracked and wheeled vehicles in a heavy division (and a *much* smaller share than that if you talk about the operational corps that was maneuvering

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during ODS, as was the case with VII Corps). No way, no how.

Would we have still won? Yeah—but the victory might have been significantly different (73 Easting may not have turned out the way it did, not to mention the different timeline for the advance, more crews would have likely become casualties, etc.). I served in an armored brigade with M60A3's, and it ain't in the same league as the M1A1, or even the M1 vanilla version.

And I never claimed that it was, or that the M1A1 wasn't a better tank, although the M60A3's sight was apparently better than the M1s and maybe the M1A1's (Pete Stickney has commented about this in the past),

Unless Pete had a lot of experience with both M60A3 and M1A1 units, I am not really buying that either. My own experience was somewhat apocryphal, but serving in a FORSCOM separate armored brigade (the armor school's then-resident deployable brigade, at that) during repeated NTC and ramp-up exercises, including the construction and maintenance of a CALFEX range where the thermals were critical, I saw M60A3's roll through the nighttime defensive exercise, company after company, and let me tell you, the shooting those guys did was *lousy*. When you can go down range after the range goes cold and have your target replacement team return in hasty fashion with the explanation that not a *single* hit made upon the silhouettes (which had heated pads on them to provide a decent thermal sig), I am not going to be overly impressed with the quality of the M60A3's thermals (you can count a few tanks failures to possibly lousy gunnery procedures, but entire *companies*?). It was the first gen TTS we fielded, for gosh sakes.

so I don't know that 73 easting would have been at higher rather than lower cost to us.

Higher, because...

IIRR,

the accounts I've read of 73 easting indicate that few if any of our tanks got hit; we hit theirs before they could see or target us. The 120mm would maybe get a few kills where the 105mm would bounce, but that would be about it.

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Uhhmm...a lot of those kill shots were made while moving at high speed across the desert during that battle, IIRC. The M1A1 was a MUCH better stabilized platform for that kind of shooting than the M60A3 was. The M1A1's did have better thermals than the M60A3TTS, which also contributed. The 120mm was of course more lethal, as well (its smooth bore makes it a much better APDS shooter, in addition to the advantages gained by the larger penetrator of the 120mm round).

Nor, AFAIR, did the GAO claim that the M60A3 was "inherently" a better tank

than the M1; they stated that the M1 had problems (it did), that these problems would take time and money to solve (they did), and that the M1 would impose an additional and expensive logistics burden on US forces (it did and does).

The GAO made it sound like a gilded lilly from what I recall of the matter—which it was not. It proved itself well in terms of survivability, maintainability, and lethality (it beat the M60A3 in all categories, and yes, I said maintainability. As to the "additional and expensive logistics burden"—rubbish. See my points earlier about density and its real impact on effects. And I never saw a M1A1 sit out an entire BDE-level multi-week training exercise due to lack of parts...while I did see an M60A3 do exactly that at Bliss (it became a running joke to drive by the location "where the tank is" and see if the crew was still laying around waiting for the wrrench-turners and loggies to get it runniing again).

Does that mean that would have been

the best way to go? That's another matter. As another example where I've found the GAO's case more persuasive than the military's,

get back to those past piccadillos where they proved to be utterly wrong. IIRC, the M1 was supposedly just too dangd high tech to do the job reliably (ODS proved that one wrong),

After how many years in service, and how many upgrades?

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Nt much of either, really. For example, the 3rd ACR was fielding its M1A1's under a NET program (having been M60A3 users up to that time) back in '87 when we deployed to Bliss to perform our NTC ramp-up. Three years later they were charging through the Iraqi desert. The M60A3TTS was actually the fourth variant of a tank that really started out as the fourth variant of the even earlier M48 (it followed the M48A3 and preceeded the M48A5, the latter being the only other tank I have any real experiance with). The M1A1 was only the second major variant of the M1 series, preceeded by only the vanilla M1 that was only ever intended to be a temporary platform until the A1's became available with their definitive suite of systems. So in summation, you have a M1 series that after only a few short years of service and one major upgrade (that was planned from the outset) outperform the heck out of the older M60A3 that was the culmination of *many* years of development and *many* years of service experience, and your point would be...?

Offhand, I can't recall any time where the GAO

or any other credible analysis group has said that a system can never, ever be made reliable, not even Star Wars. What I have seen them say is that such and such a system isn't reliable currently, and given the current state of the art it is unlikely that it can be made reliable in such and such a timeframe, or that the spares policy is inadequately funded to guarantee the MC rate claimed, and so on.

They hammered the heck out of the M1 and M2 both from what I recall; if anything being more nasty with the latter (which also proved to be an outstanding system that overwhelmingly outperformed its predecessor M113 "battle taxi").

the M2 Bradley was just way too underprotected (compared to what, the M113??!), etc.

Applique armor kits are pretty much SOP these days on Bradleys in combat (and every other APC/IFV), so I'd say they called that one right.

They were not so standard during ODS IIRC.

After all, if RPGs are ubiquitous on the battlefield, then you'd

better have armor to protect against them. And if your opponent's IFVs are armed with 73mm and 30mm

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guns, then protection against them is certainly advised.

There is not doubt that it is wonderful to make your IFV as susrvivable as you can, but the critique of the Brad for its *supposed* weak protection and its high sillouette were proven by events to be utterly wrong.

A 1994 GAO study indicated we no longer needed a continental air defense force (where was the GAO when 9-11 recriminations started flying about?).

CONAD protected us not at all on 9/11, and wouldn't have because it was oriented to deal with external threats. Since CONAD was designed to protect us from nuclear-armed bombers flying over the poles from the Soviet Union, and they were gone, of course we no longer needed it for that purpose.

Guy, ISTR that those interceptors were frequently scrambled to check out all sorts of unknowns, not just those that might be TU-95's inbound from over the Atlantic. Come on, man. We did not have the alert aircraft capacity on duty and ready to handle the situation. I am not tossing barbs at the USAF here, just noting that your vaunted GAO had forseen *no* potential threat that justified a decent AD status just seven years before 9-11 proved that idea wrong.

If you wish to

postulate that the GAO or anyone else should foresee every possible threat that might develop up to 1,000 years into the future, then of course they will be wrong.

Yep, but you have to be willing to admit they *were* wrong in this case.

In 1981 the GAO strongly questioned the USAF's desire to turn the F-16 into a more capable multi-role platform and have them optimized for air-to-ground work (thank goodness the USAF view prevailed).

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Actually, I agree with the GAO (as of 1981). The F-15 should have been the designated multi-role platform, not the F-16. Not that the F-16 didn't need A/G capability, but that shouldn't have been its USAF DoC, at least prior to the end of the Cold War and the widespread availability of PGMs usable by single-place a/c.

We'll have to disagree on that one, then. I think the USAF got it right and the GAO was rather myopic in that case. The GAO was taking the Boyd/LWF Mafia view hook/line/sinker, and not too many folks I am aware of today think that would have been a good idea in hindsight, so again, the GAO came up short.

For every "good" GAO story you tell, I can tell you two "not so good ones".

Of course, and the same is true for any other organization, which certainly includes DoD and the services.

The topic we were discussing was really the GAO though, was it not?

What do these cases say about your view that the GAO is just a wonderful and accurate organization?

Kevin, please don't put words in my mouth. I've never claimed that it was, indeed I specifically stated upthread that the quality of their work varies, that I evaluate each report from them just as I do from any other source, and then make up my mind which I consider more objective and accurate. I have agreed and disagreed with their conclusions just as I have with those of the services, DoD, or any other arm of the government. I have no knee-jerk response that says "it's from GAO, so it must be the real skinny, and everyone else's view must be 100% wrong". I consider that they often provide a valuable, outside the Pentagon/service view of things, which (after all) is their designated function.

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Too much bias included, IMO. You expect a certain level of bias from the proponent, but not from a supposedly unbiased external evaluator.

<snip F-35 numbers etc.)

Uhhh...
the USN
has also
been known
to make
noises about
final
production
numbers,
and the
Brits
threatened
to pull out
altogether.
1700 is
not
assured as
of yet,
though I
think it
likely that
we will
acheive
that
number.

Last I checked 1,700
included revised
USN/USMC numbers.

But according to your own GAO, it very
possibly never even enter into
production at all.

that's a bitgarbled so I'mnot sure what you're referring to, the
a/c or
the

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engine(s)?

Both, obviously (if the aircraft goes, the engines will be sort of useless unless they find new homes).

The a/c obviously isn't going to go, unless they invariably catch fire every time the engine is started. Re new homes for the engines, even if the F135 proves to be the best choice for the F-35, we've still got a fair number of new platforms (LRS, UCAVs etc.) which may find one or the other engine (or developments based on them) better suited to them, which is yet another reason why I think keeping both engines going, at least for a while, is the smart thing to do.

What programs do you want to cut in order to make that happen? You know that is the end result, right? The resource pie is not infinite?

GAO has come down hard on the idea of going to production until the final definitive version has been tested...they never heard of spirals or what?

Actually, they are the ones who've always advocated spiral development (although they didn't call it that) when the military was pushing concurrent development and production.

Gee, then they seem to have forgotten that in the present day...

Or have you forgotten the

Cook-Craigie plan in the '50s, which resulted in us buying large numbers of unusable F-100s, F-102s etc., which sat on the tarmac while fixes were devised and implemented, and the programs ran far behind schedule.

Weren't those the products of that wonderful competitive flyoff idea that you think so highly of?

Or the navy's 3T (Tartar/Terrier/Talos) program, which was so unreliable

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that McNamara called

a halt to performance improvements, putting all the money into the "Get-Well" program so that there was a reasonable chance the systems would actually work as advertised. Or the F100 engine, or any number of other projects. It's been the military that has continually tried to push technically immature programs into production, the F-22 and F-35 merely being the latest in a long line leading to development delays and/or very expensive retrofit programs later.

Like the M1, right? Sure....

They don't mind if we slip the program another few years *right now*? You probably like their "fly before buy" argument, I know... I on the other hand don't like the idea of further slipping the introduction dates *now* because we *might* run into problems later in the program that *might* necessitate a slip....

And of course the reason, most of the reason for the current slip was the lack of competition and the too early selection of a technically immature, non-representative winner,

Balderdash. That is your claim, but it is not exactly accepted as fact.

which is exactly what the GAO

was saying would happen back about 8-10 years ago when they stated that the development timeline was too concurrent with production plans. They said major slippage was virtually guaranteed given the setup, and whaddya know.

Ten years ago they were critiquing the JSF program like that?

But paradoxically, they argue that we should dump money that we want to spend elsewhere into the

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development of a second
engine
for
a program that they say should not receive a
production
decision...odd,
that.

They say it's not ready to receive a production decision yet,
and
clearly
it
isn't. We've done far too much concurrent development and
production
over
the
years, often because the military wants so badly to have a
program
(which
they've become institutionally invested in) that they try and
put the
a/c
into
production before it's ready so that the momentum will be
too great to
stop it,
and they can then go back to Congress later for the money to
fix the
problems
which they already knew about but were afraid to mention.

How long you want to fly those F-16's and A-10's? How much more money
do
you
want to dump into buying more of them because you are unwilling to take
an
acceptable risk in regards to F-35 spiral development?

The problem isn't spiral development, it's concurrent development and
production. As stated above, GAO
is a fan of spiral development – get the bugs out of the basic a/c first
and give it some less than
all-up but still very useful capability out of the gate.

That is not the read I get regarding their critique of the F-35 right now.

As to buying more F-16s to tide us over

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(unfortunately not an option for A-10s), that's a perfectly acceptable alternative at the moment,

Gee, you DO think we have an infinite resource pie, huh? Come on now...

because they are still completely viable in the current environment, they're relatively cheap, and we know we can find buyers for them down the road.

Buyers at pennies on the dollar, dollars that have to come out of *something's* hide. Guy, I hate to say this but you are beginning to sound a bit like Andrew over in SMN when it comes to procurement funding, when in fact if you pay Paul, you have to rob Peter. So what are you gonna cut to buy these new F-16's?

And if ever there were an example of the success of

spiral development, the F-16 would be it. I'm less enthused about buying more F-18E/Fs if the F-35C is further delayed, but that's certainly an option. way backwhen, the GAO recommended that we take the development money being spent on the F-18E/F (somewhere between \$4.8 and \$6.7 billion IIRR) and spend most of it procuring several hundred new F-18Cs, instead putting more money earlier into what became JSF. I still believe that would have been the better approach.

Now I can agree somewhat with the latter, to some extent, though buying more C model F/A-18's would have been hard to swallow (the used market for them is even leaner than that for the F-16).

<snip Bush telling Blair he didn't want to cause his government to fall>

Wonderful. But I still fail to see what that has to do with the management and budgeting of the F-35 program...nor do I think it a proper view to hold (I don't always agree with the current Admin).

Whether you agree with it or not, it's clear that the current US government 'favors' the Blair government and cares deeply about whether Blair is around or not. As I said, almost anything we can do that will help him politically is worth the price, if it helps keep the

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British in Iraq (we've currently got 14 combat brigades in Iraq, the Brits 2) and Afghanistan (IIRR they've got 3,300 troops in the latter currently, who've been busy along with the Canadians in fighting the Taliban so that we can transfer a brigade to Iraq). So far, we've spent or allocated \$420 billion for the war in Iraq, and another \$89 billion for Afghanistan. I don't know how much the Brits have spent in the two countries in the last three years, but I'm sure it's a hell of a lot more (in monetary terms, and ignoring the lives of their soldiers) than the potential benefit they stand to gain from the F-35, after subtracting the \$2 billion or so they've kicked in for R&D. So, how much are you willing to spend to pick up their slack, if Blair goes and the successor PM and/or government doesn't have his commitment and decides that they are no longer willing to support us? Where does the US get the troops to replace them?>

I don't share your view of the UK as being such a mercenary entity. Probably we have already argued this enough.

I consider anything we can do which might

help keep the current UK leadership in power worthwhile, but keeping the F136 development going at least until the F135 demonstrates maturity and that it can meet its specs is a no-brainer to me.

Lessee, that means you are saying we should continue to pour more money into a less mature second project that does not meet specs instead of maybe using the same money to ensure the first more

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mature project can indeed meet
specs, all while trying to stay within a fixed
budget...not the best
of
solutions IMO.

Competition, competition, competition. What's P&W's
incentive to get
things
fixed quickly and keep costs down if they know they're the
only game in
town?
We've been down that road before with them.

Yeah, and your own GAO once published a very favorable report concerning
their sole-sourcing of engines for the F-15 and F-16 (they actually
did).

I haven't seen that one. the one I did read from May or June of this
year, specifically mentioned the
competition between the F100 and F110 as an example of good practice
in holding costs down and getting a
better product sooner.

Go to their website and use the search function and you can indeed find
laudatory comments from them regarding the F100 program while it was still a
single-source. They apparently had been asked to check into the possibility
that P&W was fleecing the government and not providing proper value for the
dollar.

"Competition" does not mean squat if the program becomes so slow

Are you saying that GE's continuing to develop the F136 will slow down
P&W's F135 development program,
or the F-35 program itself?!

Again, rob from Peter to pay Paul. I had this same discussion with Andrew
not long ago over shipbuilding budgets; you can't dump money into anything
without it either coming out of somewhere else or being a complete mark-up
to the spending bill. When you do the latter, take a gander at all of the
"unfunded priorities" that the services have on the table on a permanent
basis and tell me how many of the top ranked ones are being sacrificed in

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the name of the F136. Hell Guy, I was a training officer during a period where we lacked the funding to send new troops through AIT for gosh sakes (and that was in the nineties!). Rob from Peter...

or too
expensive such that it never reaches fruition.

Since much if not most of the "too expensive" is due to program delays and cost overruns stemming from sole-source monopolies, i.e. "this is it and we're stuck with it", all things considered I'll take competition.

Nor will "competition" mean a lot to the guy who in 2018 or 2020 is tasked to take his F-16 MLU-cubed into a nasty IADS environment because the F-35 was stillborne due to cost overruns incurred early in the program by doing things like demanding a second engine be developed *right now*...

In this case, the F136 wasn't required to be developed *right now*, it was designed to trail the F135 by a couple of years; I think they should have been continued at the same pace. That it may well be available about the same time as the F-35 is, is due to the slippage in the a/c's schedule.

\$400 million next year for the F136, right? You need to be aware that DoD does NOT have a big printing press in the basement that churns out new C-notes as required...

<snip>

Again, the idea that a less mature project that already is not meeting specs is better than a more mature project that also needs to meet those same specs?

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Neither is currently meeting specs, although both companies claim the problems are minor and easily fixable (they would), and the airframe is also behind schedule and over-budget. We've already denied ourselves an option with the latter, with the program running about 2 years behind schedule, so why would we wish to repeat that with the engines?

Because some folks realize that despite all the well-wishes for pie-in-the-sky competition in the future, they have to try and restrain *current* costs in an increasingly constrained budget environment?

Which is why McCain and other members of congress are voting to withhold F-35 development funds until the a/c demonstrates a greater level of maturity. As IMO they should.

LOL! Again with the approach that goes, "OK, we are gonna cut your development funding, and we are further going to make you spend part of what you *do* get on something that you do not find on your CPM diagram for a successful program." Not real logical IMO.

<snip some back and forth>

Kevin, we're currently spending \$8 billion a month on our military in Iraq.

Whoopie, that has little to do with the JSF program, nor should it.

But it has a whole lot to do with how much it would cost us to replace the Brits

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in southern Iraq, seeing as how we've currently got 2 or 3
division
equivalents
in the country. Let's low-ball it and call it \$1 billion/month.

Bad math, IMO. Firstly, there is no way the Brits are gonna pull out that
ricky-ticky; even if they do decide to pull the chocks, it takes some
time
to disengage unless they want to look *really* foolish.

So they take six months or so, assuming they're given that much time by
their electorate, and assuming
that the new government thinks _they_ will look foolish. After all, it
won't be _their_ policy they're
repudiating ("it was all Blair's doing; we wanted to leave but he wouldn't
let us"), and they will have
the support of the overwhelming majority of the british public to get out
sooner rather than later.

We are back to portraying the UK as a mercenary nation...sorry, but that
will have to remain your view, not mine.

We are already
looking at drawing down our own forces (indeed we already are, evidenced
by
the fact that equipment is being returned from Iraq that had previously
been
used as a deployment pool due to future reductions in committed forces).
You
are dealing in really big "what ifs" here, Guy, and even then your "what
ifs" have too many supporting "what ifs" of their own to draw any real
conclusions.

My what ifs don't include assuming that "everything will work out just as
we hope it will, the new Iraqi
government will take firm hold and be able to start achieving major
increases in security so that we
will be able to make major reductions in our own forces soon." They may
do so and I'll be happily
surprised, but I'm sure not counting on it. Casey says he hopes to,
Rumsfeld says we may go up and
down, but both know that (barring a purely political temporary draw-down
for the election) our military
ability to do so will be determined by what happens there, not by what we

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want. My what-ifs do include the possibility that any withdrawal by the Brits will only encourage the insurgency, as they can chalk that up as a huge political success, just as getting the Spanish and Italians to leave were lesser successes.

See above about mercenary nature...

We

also have troops in Afghanistan, and the UK, Canadians and a few others are taking over some of their work, allowing us to decrease our presence there by 3,000 or so. The UK has a two-brigade division in southern Iraq, and has had it there for three years. How much do you think it will cost us to pick up the British mission in southern Iraq and Afghanistan if they decide to pull out?

<snip>

You have just come full circle back to the mercenary view. IMO, if they folks of those nations feel the missions are necessary and worth the costs,

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they should (and have, and do) contribute to the effort. Not because the US is going to assure them a nice, fat paycheck for doing so. We have to resort to the latter measure in some cases with other nations, but that does not mean we should have to do it with our closest allies. If I were a UKan or a Canuckian reading your views on the subject, I'd be rather peeved that anyone should even suggest we were supporting the efforts for "filthy lucre". If they pulled out over the lack of the F136, or even over their failure to continue with the JSF program at large, then I would say we would have lost damned little—luckily, I don't believe those nations to be as shallow in their outlooks as you seem to think.

You might want to check how the folk of the UK and most of the ruling party feel about the mission's necessity and whether it's worth the costs — see the vote total above, for their attitude _prior_ to the war, never mind their current feelings. The Brit's are still there because Blair is still in charge — Brown hasn't invested his personal and political capital in the war, and it's unclear to me whether he believes it's necessary; Blair has and does.

You are further confirming yourself into the mercenary view of the

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British mentality; and I just don't think that is fair to the Brits, nor is it accurate.

As I have stated, it's not a question of being mercenaries (freelance guns for hire), it's a question of cost/benefit.

That is mercenary, IMO. If the Brits are only there because of the F136, we don't need them. I don't think that is the case.

The British public does not and has not felt that Iraq was worth it. That they have not

been able to force their government to act accordingly is due almost entirely to one man, the PM.

<snip Clinton administration's reluctance to get involved in Balkans>

The fact is that Blair was ready to do something effective, including

ground troops, before we were.

Heard that saw before, and unfortunately it does not stand up to actual reason or fact. This is one of those few cases where I can say, "I was there." We were conducting a V Corps Warfighter exercise at Grafoenwehr in Germany at the time, and the 1st ID(M) was pulled from the exercise before it even got actually going to prepare for a "real world" commitment, with V Corps itself being ready to dump the exercise and paying a lot more attention to real world events than what was going on in the sim centers and CP's. It was rather easy for Blair to beat the

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drum in that case,
knowing
that there was going to be no ground force
commitment (period) unless
the
US was part of it and facilitated it.

Actually, he seems to have been almost willing to go it
alone. He was
prepared
to put over 50,000 ground troops (i.e. over half the British
Army) into
the
ground campaign, and he (along with Albright) was pushing
the Pentagon
and
Clinton to rescind their comments about not using ground
troops, just
as
he had
already. It's instructive that the Neocons (and GWB) were
the ones
saying
much
the same thing at the time, albeit from outside. Blair
managed to get
Clinton
onboard, and together they worked out compromise language
to keep NATO
from
publicly splintering over the issue.

Please show where the Brits were ready to go it alone, or even had the
capability to do so. They were not; heck, neither were we.

See the book "American Ally" for details as to how Blair's attitude
evolved, and just what he was
willing to do. Expecting a two-fingered typist to type the entirety of the
relevant chapters is a bit
much to expect;—)

I don't believe the Brits had the capacity to make it happen, even if they
had the will.

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The funny
thing is that
is is still not
our place to
set policy to
favor
any
individual
leader of the
UK
government,
now is it?

Oh, come, let's not pretend
we live in an utopian fantasy
world.
We've
set
policy to favor/disfavor any
number of
governments/candidates, up
to
and
including organizing their
overthrow when it suits us.
For a
democratic
ally
like the UK our favoritism
should be less obvious and
less intrusive
because we
still have to be on
reasonablygood terms with
the opposition if
'our'
candidate
loses, but to pretend that
favoritism doesn't exist is
naive.

I believe you greatly exaggerate the
situation. We have no business
sticking
our noses under their political tent, just as
they have no business
doing
so
under ours. And largely the two

Re: Other JSF options

governments have refrained from doing so.

See conversation between Bush and Blair above. If that doesn't constitute favoritism in your book, then we have very different definitions of the word.

What plums did we send them? None; nothing more than platitudes were offered. No US scheming to keep Blair in office, no attempts to influence the British electorate with contracts (as you seem to think would be required), etc.

Here's a couple of examples: on the geo-political scale there was the Bush administration's getting re-engaged in the Palestine/Israeli situation after having adopted a hands-off policy, done at Blair's specific request because it was important to both him and his electorate, even though much of the administration had to be dragged kicking and screaming to do so.

Show me the money?

We still wouldn't talk to Arafat, but

we did at least start paying attention again and talk to others, as well as have Bush make several speeches on the subject where he'd been notably silent.

Again, show me the money?

On a smaller, more direct scale, there doesn't seem to have been any executive-branch pressure at all to alter the choice of the US101 as the next Marine One, which was certainly a contract that helped both the British and Italians while hurting a US company. For all I know there was pressure applied to influence the selection for the US101, but even if the US101 won purely on the merits, the fact that the executive didn't bow to the usual protectionist clamor and overrule the US101 choice in favor of Sikorsky, or even AFAIR mention it as an issuer, spoke volumes.

Re: Other JSF options

OFCS, that last bit is a complete and utter stretch. I guess next you will decide we just selected EADS for the LUH program because we really want to support AI's subsidization policy? The US101 was not selected as a sop to the Brits over Iraq, for gosh sakes.

<snip>

and further thinks that
tossing money needed elsewhere at a less
mature project that does not
meet
specs is better than tossing it at a more
mature one that by all
accounts
will meet those specs well before the former
does.

Assuming all goes well, as the military and contractor
assures us it
will,
and
they've never been hopelessly optimistic/wrong before.

Do you really think the P&W engine is going to fail?

Depnds how you define 'fail'. Do I think it will reasonably close to on
time, on budget, and works as
advertised? Not if GE isn't around to pressure them.

Why did the M1, M2, Apache, F-16, F-15, etc, not fail or nearly do so for
the same reason? Was Patriot a failure because there was no competing
missile breathing down its neck? How about DDG-51--how has that program
failed because no other destroyer design was competing?

Do you really think

that contributing less money to the program now will result in getting to
IOC in the same timeframe as what is now planned?

Re: Other JSF options

Yes, if the money is spent on R&D instead of jumping ahead with an immature product, which has been the all-to-oft-repeated practice.

So if we follow the F-22 model, we would be better off?

Do you really think that forcing the DoD to spend \$400 million of the R&D funding where it does not want to, while threatening to pull \$1.2 billion from the funding at the same time, is a really *good* strategy to follow to achieve that IOC?

Yes.

Then we are at an impasse.

Brooks

When DoD shows that it can run an a/c acquisition program with major development requirements and

have it come in within, oh, let's be generous and say 25% of the original budget, schedule and performance they predicted, I may be inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt. As it is, given programs that suffer repeated Nunn-McCurdy breaches and development delays because the services are far too willing to believe (or at least use) fairy-tale numbers, I'm not going to trust their judgement alone.

Guy