



## NATIONAL DEFENSE

# Adverse Effects Of Producing Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopters Before Completion Of Development And Tests

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Pursuant to a congressional request, GAO reviewed the adverse effects of producing Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopters before completion of development and tests by the Department of Navy.

GAO noted that: (1) through June 30, 1969, the Navy spent over a quarter of a billion dollars for the development and acquisition of the Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopter Weapon System; (2) this system, designed for the delivery of torpedoes by drone helicopters, operates from surface ships for the purpose of attacking and destroying enemy submarines; (3) although this weapon system provided the Navy with a capability it did not previously have, the system suffered from a high rate of loss of the drone helicopters; (4) of the 750 drones purchased by the Navy, 362 have been lost; (5) GAO believes that the difficulties experienced with the system resulted, in large part, from the Navy's ordering the drone helicopters into production before they were fully developed and tested; (6) at the time these helicopters were under development in the early 1960's, the Navy had under way a ship modification program; (7) this program included, in part, installing on destroyers equipment needed to permit drone helicopters to operate from them; (8) modifications were completed on the first ship nearly 3 years before the first drone helicopter was delivered to the fleet; (9) the ship-to-drone gap, together with the capability that the drone helicopter was expected to afford the fleet, created strong pressure on the Navy and on the contractor to expedite development and delivery of the helicopters; (10) it appears that this pressure was a major factor leading to production of the helicopters before they had been fully developed and tested; (11) there have been no purchases of the drone helicopter since June 1966; (12) there are no plans for future purchases; (13) the practice of concurrently developing and producing weapon systems was a matter of concern to the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel; (14) in its report on July 1, 1970, the Panel recommended that a new development policy for weapon systems and other hardware should be formulated and promulgated to cause the reduction of technical risks through demonstrated hardware before full-scale development, and to provide the needed flexibility in acquisition strategies; and (15) the Panel's report also stated that the new policy should provide a general rule against concurrent development and production, with the production decision deferred until successful demonstration of developmental prototypes.

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