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Murtha Statement on the Air Force Tanker Replacement Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, issued the following statement before today's open hearing on the Air Force contract award for the tanker replacement program with Ms. Sue Payton, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition and LTG John "Jack" Hudson, ASC Commander and Program Executive Officer:

"This committee has done everything it could to speed up the decision by the Air Force to put tankers in the Air Force arsenal.

"There is no committee in the House that has done more to recognize the importance of aerial refueling tankers to the Air Force's ability to respond to any threat to our national security.

"I personally consider our aerial refueling program to be a major weapons system that is essential to our national security.

"Having said that, when I look at our banks being bailed out by foreign countries, when I see a rising trade deficit with China and the rest of the world, and when my staff gives me a paper that shows our Treasury and other U.S. Agencies owe China \$922 billion in debt, I think it's imperative that the Air Force explain to this committee its decision to award a major U.S. weapons system to a foreign company."

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