

Eleven billion dollars has already been spent. We have almost \$30 billion to go but it extends way out into the middle of the nineties. The statistics that you mentioned in your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, on the growth and everything else, are derived from these final numbers that are for many years ahead of us.

That prediction into the future has led to uncertainties, and yet these numbers are treated as very precise things. Now, I think that is what Senator Cohen has been concerned about, and what we are trying to do is make the presentation to Congress more reflective of the actual, known program.

Now, we just do them the way you have asked us to do. It is a formula. You do this, you do that, and as a consequence, we are going to try to take the initiative so that we, indeed, can be more responsive to your constituents.

We need to get into what it is costing us now; what is it going to cost us in the future, and how much more accurate can we be, and thus, how you can hold management's feet to the fire.

Senator COHEN. Part of the difficulty with the F-18, as I recall, is that it was originally projected to be a low mix on the scale—a lower cost replacement of the F-14.

Yet the costs have gone anywhere from a projected \$15 to \$18 billion a copy now to a \$39 billion projection. Those are the kind of cost growths that are difficult to comprehend.

Mr. THAYER. Again a very large part of that, is inflation, a very large part. So it doesn't give you a picture of true cost growth.

Senator COHEN. But that is part—

Mr. THAYER. That is really what you are interested in.

Senator COHEN. That is right. It is important that we get a true picture in the beginning, as close as we can, so that we know exactly what we are going to deal with. Part of the difficulty is we say, "Well, we think it is going to cost \$14 or \$15 billion, and we can afford that. We can build that aircraft, and we can put that new aircraft in."

But if we were told initially, "it is probably closer to a \$40 or \$41 billion program," a lot of us would say, you know, "it is a good idea and a good aircraft, but maybe we ought to stick with the F-14 because we have an open production line and we can continue with this and make some modifications, but why build a newer one at that cost level."

These are the kinds of decisions that come to us late.

How much has been spent on the F-18?

Mr. THAYER. \$11 billion.

Senator COHEN. We are \$11 billion into the program.

Mr. DELAUER. But you have a lot of airplanes.

Senator COHEN. I understand that, but the question is, how many new systems can we afford to buy as opposed to, perhaps, lowering the production and getting more of a certain aircraft or whatever it might be.

I just want to make one point, Mr. Chairman, and part of it goes back to the issue of credibility. I appreciate what Secretary Thayer was saying, but I think when we see news reports such as appeared in the New York Times today and also in the Wall Street Journal, it is not difficult to understand why some consider the SAR to be a less than credible document.