

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 16, 2016

Federal Minister Ursula von der Leyen
Federal Ministry of Defense
Fontainengraben 150
53123 Bonn

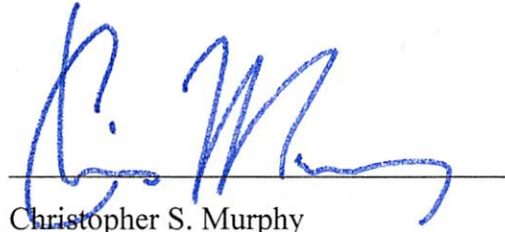
Dear Federal Minister Ursula von der Leyen:

We are writing in regard to your planned procurement of up to 70 heavy-lift helicopters to meet your country's increased air mobility needs. We strongly believe that maintaining interoperability between German and American equipment is essential, as Germany is one of our most important allies, and we share your goal of ensuring that Germany has the best equipment to meet your military and humanitarian requirements. We understand that by the end of this year you will announce a plan to replace your existing CH-53G heavy-lift helicopters with new helicopters, and we would urge your consideration of the new CH-53K King Stallion aircraft.

Currently under development by Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, the CH-53K aircraft will provide your country with the best-in-class heavy lift and air mobility support. The CH-53K model will be the world's premier heavy lift helicopter, leveraging the lessons learned over 50 years of manufacturing and operational success with its CH-53A/D/E predecessors. The CH-53K King Stallion, which will be equipped with new engines, new composite material rotor blades, and a wider aircraft cabin, will improve and enhance the CH-53 family that Germany and other U.S. allies are flying today. It has been designed to be reliable, low maintenance, and survivable across the full spectrum of combat and humanitarian operations, in environments ranging from desert heat to arctic cold. Expeditionary in nature, the CH-53K aircraft will be fully shipboard compatible and capable of operating from austere and remote forward operating bases. Flying a range of missions, including carrying cargo, vehicles, artillery and troops, the CH-53 is designed to operate on land or at sea, and to support the U.S. Marine Corps and the armed forces of our allies for decades to come.

Sikorsky Aircraft is a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of military and commercial helicopters. Sikorsky helicopters are used by all five branches of the U.S. armed forces, along with military services and commercial operators in 40 nations. The CH-53K will be built by an innovative and experienced workforce. In the last century, Sikorsky helicopters have saved an estimated two million lives since performing the world's first helicopter rescue in the 1940s. We are confident that the CH-53K is perfectly suited to meet Germany's air mobility needs and we look forward to further strengthening the relationship between our two countries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Murphy', written over a horizontal line.

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Blumenthal', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator