September 7, 1993

The Honorable John Conyers
Chairman, Legislation and National
Security Subcommittee
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your request, we are providing information on takeoff and landing distances for the C-17 aircraft. Takeoff and landing distance information and performance information, such as cargo weight and delivery distance, was obtained from the Safety Supplement to the C-17 Flight Manual and the Systems Operational Requirements Document (SORD).

BACKGROUND

The C-17 military transport is designed to airlift substantial payloads over long ranges without refueling. It is also being designed to carry a full range of military cargo directly into small, austere airfields—runways as short as 3,000 feet. The C-17 entered operational service on June 14, 1993, when the first production aircraft was delivered to Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina.

Pending completion of flight testing, the C-17 must operate under flight restrictions that affect takeoff and landing distances. The Air Force's revised C-17 Flight Manual Performance Data Safety Supplement, dated June 10, 1993, therefore requires flight crews to use the tabular data in the Supplement to determine takeoff and landing distances. The Safety Supplement displays takeoff and landing distances based on various combinations of aircraft gross weight, temperature, and altitude. It is Department of Defense (DOD) practice to restrict the use of a new aircraft until the test program is complete. This is implemented through the temporary issuance of a Safety Supplement.

GAO/NSIAD-93-288R C-17 Takeoff and Landing Distances