

Sunday Seoul

[2016 National Audit] Congresswoman Youngkyo Seo points out, “Lifeline of Special Forces, the Cargo Parachute Project, turns out to be disappointment missing the target by 15,000 m... critical”

- The GPS Cargo Parachute Project to airdrop equipment · supply · ammunition to resupply Special Forces

- With the minimum requirement decision made in 2006 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it was expected to be introduced in 2016

[Sunday Seoul | Politics Desk] The “GPS Cargo Parachute Project,” which was exclusively reported by the media as the lifeline of Special Forces, cannot be introduced as scheduled at the end of 2016.

According to the materials sent by the Ministry of National Defense for the preparation of the National Audit on the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Congresswoman Youngkyo Seo (Seoul Jungnang congressional district) of the Defense Committee of the National Assembly, the “GPS Cargo Parachute Project” failed the 2015 airdrop test by missing the target point by 15 km. Further, it was discovered that the U.S. Airborne Systems company breached the contract and that the contract was cancelled in its entirety.

The “GPS Cargo Parachute Project” was commissioned to resupply equipment · supply · ammunition to Special Forces that have penetrated deep into the battlegrounds. The GPS Project was passed by the minimum requirement decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2006, and was scheduled for advanced research in 2007, adjustment of activation time in 2008, and finally a contract with the U.S. Airborne Systems to introduce 114 GPS cargo parachutes to the Special Forces at the end of 2016.

In June 2015, a test was conducted by airdropping 8 pieces of equipment at a high altitude. The acceptance test requires that at least 4 pieces of equipment land within 100 m of the target point – however, the target was missed by 15 km from the drop point due to an error in coordinates. As the test failed, the Special Forces judged that it was invalid and another test was rescheduled. During this process, 95.2% of the last year’s budget, which is about 2.654 billion won, was carried forward to the next year.

Moreover, during the inspection it was discovered that the U.S. Airborne Systems had switched parts made by Wamore, which were used during the initial evaluation test, to parts made by Robot Solution, and failed to report the change to the Defense Acquisition Program Administration.

The Defense Acquisition Program Administration, on discovery of this mistake, immediately cancelled the contract with the U.S. Airborne Systems and requested that the Airborne Systems reimburse 500

million won spent during the project. Presently, the U.S. Airborne Systems is considering legal action against the Defense Acquisition Program Administration of the Republic of Korea.

Congresswoman Youngkyo Seo stated, “The GPS Cargo Parachute Project was passed with the minimum requirement decision at the 219th Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting, because it was considered as one of the important strategic equipment aspects needed by our military force, and just a few days ago it was introduced in the media as the lifeline of the Special Forces and it was said that it was anticipated to be activated by the end of this year.” Nevertheless, she pointed out, “The test was considered invalid due to an erroneous drop during the acceptance test, and furthermore, a breach in contract was found during the inspection, which eventually caused the cancellation of the contract, and considering these circumstances, it would be impossible to introduce this system at the end of this year.”

In addition, Congresswoman Youngkyo Seo pointed out, “The GPS Cargo Parachute Project, which was to deliver military supplies to Special Forces working deep in the enemy territory, has been delayed by at least two years,” and further, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff must seriously consider the problems arising from this issue and must put their greatest efforts towards preventing a reoccurrence and preparing future countermeasures.”

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