Program Manager Stresses F-35'S Technical And Global Partnership Innovations

Lockheed Martin's F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program is extending technological frontiers and establishing new levels of international participation in a fighter aircraft program, the F-35 JSF's general manager told reporters today at the Paris Air Show.

"Our international F-35 team is well on its way to producing an aircraft system that ensures allied interoperability, closes the capability gap, enables technology transfer and allows air forces around the world to modernize their inventories with a single, highly capable and affordable design," said Tom Burbage, executive vice president and general manager of the Lockheed Martin F-35 JSF program. "This program represents all-new thinking, both in terms of its myriad technical breakthroughs, and its multi-company, multi-national character. The scope of the F-35 program's international participation is unmatched in aviation history."

Burbage noted that the program has begun tooling up for production, and remains on schedule for first flight in late 2005. He added that the process of enlisting international suppliers is ongoing and intense.

"The System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase of the program is less than two years old, and some of our international partners joined up less than a year ago, but at this moment we are actively engaged with governments and industries in every partner country to ensure that their industrial participation justifies their investment in F-35. We are lining up suppliers in each of those countries, and will continue to do so throughout the 10-year SDD period and into production."

F-35 SDD partner countries are the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Australia.

Revolutionary and evolutionary technology will enable the F-35 to transform the way future military operations are conducted, Burbage said. The F-35 advances stealth technology by greatly reducing the maintenance required for low-observable materials upkeep, and by bringing stealth out of the realm of specialized night missions and into round-the-clock service. Information fusion, dramatically increased unrefueled range, precision all-weather targeting, and reduced reliance on support personnel and equipment are among the capabilities combined into a single strike fighter for the first time. The short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) version of the F-35 offers supersonic STOVL performance, as well as unrefueled range that is greater than that of many non-STOVL fighters.

"The tremendous innovation in this program runs along two parallel tracks: One track passes through a technological landscape, and the other pushes into new frontiers of partnership among businesses and allied nations," Burbage said. "We are rolling through new and exciting territory every day."

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 in conjunction with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE SYSTEMS. Companies worldwide are participating in the F-35's development. Two separate but interchangeable engines are under development by Pratt & Whitney and General Electric. Among the aircraft F-35 will replace are the AV-8B Harrier, A-10, F-16, F/A-18 and United Kingdom's Harrier GR.7 and Sea Harrier.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2002 sales of $26.6 billion.

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