International Partners 'Build' Lockheed Martin F-35 At Paris Air Show

Representatives of the nine nations partnering on the Lockheed MartinJoint Strike Fighter program took part in a unique ceremony at the Paris Air Show -- assembling a scale model of the next-generation F-35 to demonstrate team solidarity.

"This is a symbolic exercise, but it reinforces the reality that the F-35 is truly an international project with unprecedented worldwide industrial and political reach," said Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and general manager of F-35 JSF program integration. "As easy as it was to assemble this model, the real thing back in Fort Worth also is going together with similar ease. It's compelling evidence that the digital thread connecting our design directly to our manufacturing processes is performing as advertised to keep this program affordable."

Delegates from the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Norway and the United States took turns adding sections of the 1/10th-scale model until it was completed. Each section displays the flag of one partner country.

"The completed F-35 model comprises nine sections fused into a single entity -- a perfect analogy of the unity displayed by the JSF partner countries on which the success of this program depends," Burbage said. "The JSF program already is showing its potential to strengthen allied ties while helping to galvanize the economies of each partner nation."

The F-35 is a next-generation, supersonic, multi-role stealth aircraft designed to replace aging AV-8B Harriers, A-10s, F-16s, F/A-18 Hornets and United Kingdom Harrier GR.7s and Sea Harriers. The first F-35, a conventional-takeoff-and-landing (CTOL) variant, is scheduled for completion at year's end and first flight in the third quarter of 2006.

Three versions of the F-35 are planned: a CTOL, a short-takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) and a carrier variant (CV). Each is derived from a common design, and will ensure that the F-35 meets the performance needs of the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy; the U.K. Royal Air Force and Royal Navy; and allied defense forces worldwide, while staying within strict affordability targets.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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