Lockheed Martin Produces World's Only 5th Generation Fighters

Lockheed Martin , producer of the world's only 5th generation fighter aircraft, today detailed the game-changing advantages and unmatched capabilities that only 5th generation fighters can bring to the United States and its allies. The company presented a top level view of a Tactical Aircraft operations study covering air dominance, advanced fighter aircraft, operations and sustainment (O&S) costs, the order of magnitude increase in capability provided by generation fighters, mix analysis of fighter capability and cost effectiveness associated with making decisions based on long-term best value.

Speaking to a group of reporters at the Air Force Association's 2005 Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition, Rob Weiss, vice president for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Business Development, said the company's F/A-22 and F-35 fighters are "game-changing systems and the world's only 5th generation fighter aircraft being produced or developed today -- or for the foreseeable future -- for use by the United States and its allies. Fifth generation fighters are clearly the best value for the money today and the only fighters that can survive and defeat the threats of tomorrow -- a critical aspect for a country with monumental domestic responsibilities and world leadership.

"We've launched the world into the 5th generation of military aviation," said Weiss. "In fact, we believe the F/A-22 and F-35 represent a major inflection point in military aviation, and all aviation for that matter. With the F/A-22 and the F-35, the United States and our international partners and allies will have a leading advantage once again over threats to air dominance.

"The synergy that results from combining Very Low Observable (VLO) stealth, speed, maneuverability, persistence, sensor fusion, improved sustainability and lean deployment in a single platform represents a quantum leap in capability, survivability and maintainability over all previous fighters," continued Weiss. "No other fighter in the world today besides the F/A-22 and F-35 can make that claim."

Weiss said the company has recently completed its study and is now in the process of presenting conclusions to customers and independent third-party experts for comment and feedback. While much of the report is classified and cannot be publicly released, Weiss shared some of the broader conclusions in general terms:

* Air dominance will remain the first priority of a joint or coalition combatant commander in any theater. It gives U.S. military forces access to enemy areas of vulnerability without exposing those same forces to unacceptable losses.
* Advanced fighter aircraft, along with advanced surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems and air-to-air missile (AAM) systems, are proliferating worldwide and already represent a real threat to legacy aircraft. These systems will have a substantial negative impact on America's ability to gain and maintain air dominance in the future and could have profound detrimental implications to U.S. security.
* Legacy fighters have served the U.S. well for decades but are aging rapidly, incurring escalating operational & support (O&S) costs and need to be modernized.
* 5th Gen Fighters (F/A-22 and F-35) will provide an order of magnitude increase in effectiveness and survivability over legacy fighters.
* Compared to legacy fighters, an optimum mix of 5th Gen Fighters provides the U.S. with a fighter fleet that is infinitely more agile, lethal, survivable, persistent and deployable at significantly less cost. Not only are fewer 5th Gen Fighters required to ensure air dominance, the advanced fighters also require substantially fewer support aircraft such as airlifters and tankers.
* 5th Gen Fighters are clearly the best value for the money today and the only fighters that can survive and defeat the threats of tomorrow -- a critical aspect for a country with significant domestic and international responsibilities.

Weiss also questioned the FY06 Defense Budget's proposal to discontinue production of the F/A-22 after 2008 when the F-35 isn't scheduled for Initial Operational Capability (IOC) with the U.S. Air Force until 2013. He pointed out that F/A-22 production beyond 2008 would enable critical U.S. fighter force structure modernization until the F-35 is operationally proven, maintain over 40,000 jobs nationwide and preserve critical skills to keep the U.S. a technical and technological leader. It would also preserve options for additional F/A-22s in the form of derivatives

to address emerging defense or homeland security needs or for potential future Foreign Military Sales (FMS).

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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