BAE Systems And Lockheed Martin Sign Agreement For UK Lifetime Support Of F-35 Lightning II

BAE Systems and Lockheed Martin announced today that they have signed an agreement that defines how F-35 support services will be provided in the UK through the life of the F-35 Lightning II program. Bob Stevens, Lockheed Martin chairman, president and chief executive officer, and Mike Turner, BAE Systems chief executive officer, ratified an extension to their existing Teaming Agreement during the Farnborough International Air Show in Farnborough, England.

In the UK, Team JSF will draw on all of the resources of the F-35 industrial team. BAE Systems, as a principal team member, will take the lead in providing sustainment activities there for the life of the F-35 program, which is expected to extend through the next 40 years.

"This agreement takes our teaming agreement to a new level," said Stevens. "It strengthens our relationship and outlines more specifically how the aircraft will be sustained in the UK for the life of the program. Enhancing how the Lightning II will be sustained, maintained and upgraded further increases the ability of our two nations to operate together jointly as we face real world contingencies."

"The F-35 UK and US industrial bases, along with our respective governments, are now defining how the F-35 team will deliver the through-life support capabilities that the UK customer requires to support its F-35 fleet," said Turner. "BAE Systems has the skills and experience in place to lead the F-35 support services in the UK on behalf of Team JSF. Additionally, BAE Systems' current infrastructure investments will provide a cost-effective solution to meet the requirements of our customer."

In a ceremony on July 7 at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas, the F-35 made its public debut and received its name -- Lightning II -- which echoes two great fighter aircraft of the past: the World War II-era Lockheed P-38 Lightning and the supersonic, Mach 2, Lightning fighter developed by English Electric in the middle 1950s.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th Generation, supersonic stealth fighter designed to replace a wide range of existing aircraft, including AV-8B Harriers, A-10s, F-16s, F/A-18 Hornets and United Kingdom Harrier GR.7s and Sea Harriers. The F-35 will be the most powerful single-engine fighter ever made.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems. Two separate, interchangeable F-35 engines are under development: the Pratt & Whitney F135 and the GE Rolls-Royce Fighter Engine Team F136.

The inaugural flight of the first F-35, a preproduction conventional takeoff and landing variant, is planned for later this year. Fifteen F-35s will undergo flight test, seven will be used for static testing and another will validate the aircraft's radar signature.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

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