Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works(R) Reveals High Altitude Unmanned System

Lockheed Martin today unveiled the existence of a new high altitude, unmanned aerial demonstrator to reporters attending the Farnborough International Air Show. The announcement was part of a review of several Skunk Works(R) projects highlighting technologies the company is exploring to enable technology for the future.

"This UAV is an effort to better understand the flight dynamics of a tailless unmanned air system in support of our ongoing research and development work for the U.S. Air Force's future Long Range Strike Program as well as to field the next generation of structural composite concepts," explained Frank Cappuccio, executive vice president and general manager of Advanced Development Programs and Strategic Planning.

Developed in only 18 months, using internal funding, unmanned system P-175, nicknamed "Polecat" -- aligned with the well-known Skunk Works(R) name -- represents the key tenets for which the Skunk Works(R) is known. "It was specifically designed to verify three things: new, cost effective rapid prototyping and manufacturing techniques of composite materials; projected aerodynamic performance required for sustained high altitude operations; and flight autonomy attributes," said Cappuccio. "In addition, the company investment and the resulting successful flights are proof positive of our commitment to developing the next inflection point in unmanned systems."

Cappuccio said the company is also exploring technologies to enable low boom, supersonic flight over land and global reach.

"It's easy to identify a need," said Cappuccio. "The hard part is evolving the technology to make filling that need possible. The Skunk Works(R) is all about advancing the art of the possible. It may sound nebulous to some, but we thrive on ideas and innovation."

Lockheed Martin ADP, which is part of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, is the industry leader in innovative aerospace solutions providing expertise, novel approaches, cutting edge technology and a commitment to quality and timely performance to its customers.

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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