Netherlands Is First To Sign On For Next Phase Of F-35 Program

The Netherlands yesterday became the first of the F-35 partner nations to extend its participation into the production and support phase of the Joint Strike Fighter program.

Netherlands Deputy Secretary for Defence Cees van der Knaap and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England signed the Production, Sustainment and Follow-On Development Memorandum of Understanding (PSFD MOU), which extends cooperation in the program beyond the current System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase.

"Because of the extremely hard work of a very dedicated team over a couple of years, the Netherlands and the United States were able to take this very historic step toward building a powerful international coalition," said Brig. Gen. C.R. Davis, F-35 Lightning II program executive officer.

"This is the culmination of years of hard work on the part of many people, and is an outstanding example of teamwork and partnership between two strong allies," said Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and general manager of F-35 Program Integration. "That partnership exists on several levels, certainly between the military operators who will employ this phenomenal system, and between the government leaders and industry teammates who will ensure its enduring success over time. This is a great day for the F-35 program."

"We are making sure that the F-35 Lightning II brings profound improvements in capability to the Netherlands and the other F-35 operators around the world, while at the same time energizing the manufacturing and technology sectors of those countries' economies," said Dan Crowley, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and F-35 program general manager. "This is an international project, with international design input, international components and systems, and new levels of interoperability that will ensure mission success, time after time."

Once the PSFD MOU signing process is complete, the partners will cooperatively develop, produce, test, train and operate the F-35 Lightning II. The Netherlands joined as an SDD partner in June 2002 and has been involved in the JSF program since 1997. The other F-35 partner nations -- the United Kingdom, Italy, Turkey, Canada, Australia, Denmark and Norway -- are expected to sign the PSFD MOU by the end of December.

The stealthy F-35 is a supersonic, multi-role, 5TH Generation 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. First flight is planned for later this year.

Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 Lightning II 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.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 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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