Turkey Joins F-35 Program's Production And Sustainment Phase

Turkey yesterday became the fifth country to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States government to participate in the F-35 Lightning II fighter aircraft program's Production, Sustainment and Follow-on Development.

The agreement enables the Turkish aerospace and defense industry to compete for up to $10 billion in industrial participation opportunities over the next 30 years.

"Turkish industry has been closely linked with Lockheed Martinand its heritage products for many decades, and the tradition continues with the F-35 Lightning II," said Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and general manager of F-35 Program Integration. "In signing the memorandum, Turkey gains access to the world's most capable multi-role fighter, and Turkish industry continues to prove its world-class status."

Turkish industry will have opportunities to compete in areas that include airframe components, electronics, cockpit displays and information systems software. As the F-35 program evolves, new opportunities will emerge.

The F-35 program is a multinational effort to build an affordable, multi- role, 5TH Generation, supersonic, stealth fighter. The F-35 is designed to replace a wide range of aircraft, including F/A-18s, F-16s, A-10s and Harriers.

The first F-35, a conventional takeoff and landing variant, made its successful inaugural flight on Dec. 15 and continues to expand its flight envelope, logging its fifth flight on Jan. 24.

The Netherlands, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom recently signed the F-35 PSFD MoU, with the remaining partner-nations -- Italy, Denmark and Norway -- expected to sign in the next few weeks.

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 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

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