Norway Recommends Lockheed Martin F-35, Multi-National JSF Partnership Remains Strong

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg has formally recommended to his country's Parliament that Lockheed Martin's F-35 Lightning II be selected to fulfill Norway's future air-combat capability requirements.

The F-35, also known as the Joint Strike Fighter, was chosen based on its superior performance in "intelligence and surveillance, counter air, air interdict and anti-surface warfare," according to a statement from Norway's defense ministry.

"We're very pleased with the announcement and are committed to supporting the Norwegian government in moving forward with the F-35," said Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and manager of F-35 Program Integration. "The Lightning II will help ensure Norway's national security, and also brings substantial opportunities for Norwegian industry."

The F-35 is a supersonic, multi-role, 5th generation stealth fighter developed and funded by a consortium of nine countries, including Norway. It is designed to excel in both air-to-air and air-to-ground operations and features the most comprehensive and powerful avionics of any fighter ever produced. Norway plans to acquire 48 F-35s to replace older F-16s currently in service. The first F-35s would be delivered to Norway in 2016.

Norway was conducting a formal competition between the F-35 and the Saab Gripen NG. One other JSF partner nation, Denmark, is also conducting a competition for its next generation fighter and will announce its decision in 2009. All additional JSF partner nations have completed their analyses in favor of the F-35.

Three F-35 variants derived from a common design, developed together and using the same sustainment infrastructure worldwide will replace at least 13 types of aircraft for 11 nations initially, making the Lightning II the most cost-effective fighter program in history.

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.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that 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 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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