

Lockheed Martin F-35: The Centerpiece Of 21st Century Global Security

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The 5th generation F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter will serve as the centerpiece for 21st century global security while strengthening international political and industrial partnerships, a senior Lockheed Martin F-35 executive said Monday at the Farnborough Air Show.

"As we continue to define what a next generation multirole fighter is and bring to the world a profound increase in capability over the best existing fighters, I'm most proud that we're able to do it affordably--at about the price of fourth generation aircraft," said Tom Burbage, Lockheed Martin executive vice president and general manager of F-35 Program Integration. "The program continues to make good progress both in flight test and production, with all test aircraft now out of the factory and the first international jets beginning to take shape."

Throughout its life cycle, the F-35 will create enduring industrial relationships, from manufacturing and production to worldwide operation and support via Autonomic Logistics Global Sustainment (ALGS), Burbage said. F-35 ALGS, developed in parallel with the aircraft and its systems, defines the F-35's total life-cycle sustainment system.

Thousands of people are employed in the F-35 partner countries, which have invested more than U.S. \$4 billion in the project. Those countries - the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, Turkey, Canada, Norway and Denmark- also stand to become more strategically aligned as each employs the same front-line fighter that brings unprecedented levels of interoperability.

Burbage also expressed increased confidence in the program, and acknowledged that most early challenges have been overcome. With more than 280 test flights completed, all systems operating in F-35 aircraft and laboratories, 19 aircraft delivered and 31 in assembly, the program is demonstrating steady progress. In the last few months, the first F-35C carrier variant flew for the first time, the first F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) variant completed short takeoffs and vertical landings and also flew supersonically, and both the F-35A and F-35B completed structural static testing in less than half the time of legacy programs.

The F-35 Lightning II is a 5th generation fighter, combining advanced stealth with fighter speed and agility, fully fused sensor information, network-enabled operations, advanced sustainment, and lower operational and support costs. Lockheed Martin is developing the F-35 with its principal industrial partners, Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems. Two separate, interchangeable engines are also currently 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 136,000 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 2009 sales of \$45.2 billion.

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