Lockheed Martin Demonstrates Legion™ Sensor System With Pod-To-Pod Data Link

ORLANDO, Fla., Sep. 16, 2026 —Lockheed Martin's (NYSE: LMT) Legion™ sensor system successfully completed a flight test in Tucson, Arizona, using a new dedicated data link between pods. This advancement enables pilots to establish near-instantaneous engagement solutions for multiple airborne targets, providing faster, more accurate situational awareness in radar-denied and contested environments.

In a series of recent flight tests with the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Test Center (AATC), two F-16s equipped with Legion sensor systems enhanced with a pre-production version of HiveLink™, a data link developed by L3Harris, flew from Morris Air National Guard Base. In flight, the pods successfully connected via HiveLink and increased track accuracy by leveraging the shared data.

THE BIG PICTURE

Legion, formerly known as IRST21, is a passive, infrared search-and-track sensor system. Leveraging a modular open systems approach, Legion can integrate additional capabilities, such as data links, to serve as force multipliers. Legion equipped with this advanced data link establishes near-instantaneous range to multiple targets, giving aircrew rapid "depth perception" to prioritize the contacts that matter most.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Developed with the U.S. Air National Guard and the AATC, the capability reduces pilot workload, accelerates target engagement timelines and preserves aircraft bandwidth for broader mission demands.

- Under contract with the Air National Guard, Lockheed Martin is now flight testing the Legion capability on F-16 aircraft to validate performance, transportability and interoperability. Future efforts will include integration of software-defined radios, multi-waveform gateways and support for manned-unmanned teaming.

EXPERT PERSPECTIVES

- "Working side by side with the Air National Guard and AATC, we are turning proven infrared search-and-track into a networked, passive capability that is ready now," said Cristin Stengel, program director, Lockheed Martin Legion™. "With Legion's pod-to-pod data link and open architecture, we're providing aircrews faster, more accurate targeting in the most contested airspaces."

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

- The L3Harris HiveLinkTM provides resilient line-of-sight and beyond-line-of-sight connectivity for operations in contested and denied environments. HiveLink combines advanced mesh networking, CDL interoperability and exportable waveform flexibility to support missions across SWAP constrained platforms.

- For the U.S. Air Force, Legion is currently fielded and in production in a podded form factor, enabling operational interoperability across F-15 and F-16 platforms and transportability to additional fighter, non-fighter and unmanned aircraft.

- Legion builds on Lockheed Martin's legacy IRST systems that have accumulated more than 300,000 flight hours on F-14 and F-15 platforms. Its open-architecture design allows threat data to be fused with other sensors and shared across the battlespace, supporting Joint All-Domain Operations.

- With unmatched detection range, improved survivability and growth capacity, this demonstration represents the next step in Lockheed Martin's mission to deliver air dominance capabilities for the joint force.

About Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin is a global defense technology company driving innovation and advancing scientific discovery. Our all-domain mission solutions and 21st Century Security® vision accelerate the delivery of transformative technologies to ensure those we serve always stay ahead of ready. More information at Lockheedmartin.com.

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