



FACT SHEET

F-35 Lightning II

Many of today's aircraft that comprise most of the U.S. military aircraft inventory were produced in the 1970s. The combination of service-life exhaustion and escalating threats will require all of the services to slowly retire its current tactical aircraft. These issues are not restricted to the U.S. as the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy underscore similar problems. Other U.S. allies have are having the same problem.

The F-35 Lightning II is designed to replace aging fighter inventories including U.S. Air Force A-10s and F-16s, U.S. Navy F/A-18s, U.S. Marine Corps AV-8B Harriers and F/A-18s, and U.K. Harrier GR.7s and Sea Harriers. With stealth and a host of next-generation technologies, the F-35 will be far and away the world's most advanced multi-role fighter.

The single-engine, single-seat F-35 will be manufactured in three versions: a conventional-takeoff-and-landing (CTOL) variant for the U.S. Air Force, an aircraft-carrier version (CV) for the U.S. Navy, and a short-takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) version for the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.K. Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

Affordability is the cornerstone of the F-35 program. It is achieved in large part through a very high level of common parts and systems across the three versions of the aircraft. Support costs are forecast to be about half that of present-day fighters, and streamlined assembly methods will cut production time significantly.

With nine countries involved in its development (United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Australia), the F-35 represents a new model of international cooperation, ensuring affordable U.S. and coalition partner security well into the 21st century. The F-35 also brings together solid strategic international partnerships, providing affordability by reducing redundant research and development and providing access to technology around the world.

From ongoing production today through testing and full service in the future, the F-35 will seamlessly incorporate the latest technological advancements as they emerge. Its solid aerodynamic design is specifically developed with room to grow; room that will continue to

ensure that the F-35 will be a highly adaptable platform ready to accommodate rapidly changing technologies. The F-35 is a smart fighter that will get even smarter as new threats and the technologies to counter them emerge.

The F-35 will be extremely lethal. It will have excellent aerodynamic performance and advanced integrated avionics. Its next generation stealth, superb situational awareness and reduced vulnerability will make the F-35 hard to find, hard to hit and hard to kill.

The F-35 will create a truly global, highly effective fighter force. As the first U.S. combat aircraft acquisition program to have had international participation from its inception, the F-35 closes the “capability gap” between the U.S. and its allies and ensures that coalition forces are able to tackle heavily defended targets alongside U.S. forces.

Lockheed Martin is the F-35 prime contractor, while Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems are principal partners in the project.

Source: Lockheed Martin