

Lockheed Martin Team Wins Joint Strike Fighter Competition

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 26, 2001 – Lockheed-Martin has won the largest military contract ever – a possible \$200 billion competition – to build the Joint Strike Fighter.

Air Force Secretary Jim Roche said on the basis of strengths, weaknesses, and degrees of risk of the program, that the Lockheed Martin team was the winner on a “best-value” basis. He said Lockheed Martin was a clear winner over the team led by Boeing.

Total cost of the contract to enter the systems development and demonstration phase is \$19 billion. Pratt and Whitney has a \$4 billion contract to design and build propulsion systems for the craft. The British will contribute \$2 billion to the program.

Lockheed Martin teamed with Northrop Grumman and British Aerospace on the project. Pete Aldridge, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, said that both teams “met or exceeded the performance objectives established for the aircraft and have met the established criteria and technical maturity for entering the next phase of the program.”

The first operational Joint Strike Fighter, now enumerated as the F-35, is scheduled for delivery in fiscal 2008.

The F-35 is actually a family of three aircraft designed to replace aircraft in the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and the British military. Other nations interested in participating in the program include The Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway.

Plans call for the F-35 to be the world's premier strike aircraft through 2040, Aldridge said. “It will provide air-to-air capability second only to the F-22 air superiority fighter,” he said. The plane will allow the Air Force to field an almost all-stealth fighter force by 2025. The Navy and Marine variants will be the first deployment of an “all-aspect” stealth airplane.



Lockheed Martin Joint Strike Fighter

Photo by Tom Reynolds

The Air Force's F-35A version of the craft is a conventional takeoff and landing airplane to replace the F-16 Falcon and A-10 Thunderbolt II. It will partner with the F-22 Raptor. The Air Force plans to buy 1,763 of the aircraft.

The Navy's F-35B version of the plane is a carrier-based strike fighter to complement the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. It will replace earlier versions of the F/A-18 as well as the A-6 Intruder, which already has left the inventory. The Navy plans to purchase 480 JSF aircraft.

The Marine Corps, Royal Navy, and Royal Air Force need and want a short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft, dubbed the F-35C. The Marines want 609 of the new aircraft to replace their AV-8B Harriers and F/A-18 Hornets. The British want 150 to replace Sea Harriers and GR.7 Tornado fighters.

Roche said that if the military could buy the planes today, the Air Force version would cost \$40 million per copy. Navy and Marine Corps versions would be “under \$50 million.”

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