Continuing Our Tradition of Excellence

As I transition this week to my role as Vice President and General Manager of the F-35 program, I’d like to start with a big thank you message to our team. I am incredibly excited to lead this outstanding enterprise, and I am honored to call each of you my teammate. Together, I know we’re ready to take this program to new heights.

Jeff demonstrated exceptional leadership for the F-35 program, and I know that together, we can continue that legacy of excellence. As Jeff said in his farewell message – this is a team sport, and it will take all of us together to be successful.

This is a critical and exciting time for our program. We’re nearing completion of SDD Flight testing, production is ramping up, the operational fleet is growing rapidly, the warfighter is forward deploying the aircraft and we’re beginning to prepare for the implementation of follow on modernization. From development and production to sustainment and modernization – we all must redouble our commitment across the board to affordability, efficiency, quality and customer focus.

Over the next several months, I will be getting out to meet many of you to understand your challenges and hear your ideas for how we can improve our business. We already received several great ideas to our f35.communications@lmco.com mailbox, following Jeff's call for transformational ideas at his last webcast, and I encourage you all to keep the innovative thinking coming.

There is no lack of challenges ahead, but I know that this team is ready. The F-35 program is a foundational centerpiece to national security, global partnerships and economic progress – and I want to thank all of you for the role you play in delivering on our commitments. Thank you!

Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group Sails from Okinawa for Indo-Pacific Patrol

The DoD announced this week that the ships of the Wasp Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) departed Okinawa, Japan on March 19 for a routine patrol in the Indo-Pacific region. The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will conduct its missions utilizing the F-35B, which flew aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1) in its historic first ship deployment on March 5.

"The members of the 31st MEU are excited for this historic deployment," said Col. Tye R. Wallace, commanding officer of the 31st MEU in the news release. "The new F-35B Lightning II is a great addition to the team. It's a flexible aircraft, which will greatly enhance our capabilities as a MEU to execute missions across the spectrum."

The F-35 can support precision strike, close-air-support for Marines inserted inland, and relay over-the-horizon information to aid the commander’s battlefield awareness, the announcement continued. This represents a tremendous milestone for the F-35 program – and is the result of hard work and dedication from our team providing critical operations and sustainment support. Thank you to all those involved in supporting our Marine Corps!
Key Contracts to Enable Production and Sustainment Operations

The F-35 Joint Program Office awarded Lockheed Martin a $1.4 billion contract last week to fund long lead parts and components for Lot 13 aircraft for U.S., Partner Nation and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customers, as well as Lot 14 aircraft for International Partners and FMS customers. This contract enables F-35 suppliers to order parts and build subsystems on-time to maximize efficiencies, reduce costs and deliver aircraft to meet warfighter demand.

In a separate announcement, the F-35 Joint Program Office also awarded Lockheed Martin a $482 million contract to fund F-35 Air Vehicle spare parts to support operations and sustainment of the global F-35 fleet. About 280 F-35s are operating worldwide today, and this contract will help ensure spare parts within the supply chain are ordered efficiently and available on demand.

Both of these contracts are critical to our F-35 supply chain – and will help us optimize the supply base to ensure we always have the Right part, On Time, Every time across production and sustainment.

Italian F-35As Cleared for Air to Air Operational Use

Earlier this month the F-35A at Amendola Air Base, Italy, officially became part of Italy’s National Air Defense and were cleared for air-to-air operational use by the Italian Air Force.

This is an important step for the Italians operational F-35As in country. The validation of this capability required complex training and collaboration across government teams. Congratulations to the Italian Air Force on this critical achievement, we look forward to continuing to deliver transformational F-35 capabilities to support Italian defense.