



F-35 Lightning II Program

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**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TACTICAL AIR AND
LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE OPENING REMARKS, VICE ADMIRAL
DAVID J. VENLET, US NAVY, F-35 PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Thank you Chairman Bartlett, Ranking Member Reyes and members of the committee for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss the F-35.

It is my great honor to serve as the Program Executive Officer with an outstanding Air Force, Navy, Marine and International program team, and supported by the world's best technical knowledge workforce found in the Air Force Aeronautical Systems Center at Dayton, OH and Naval Air Systems Command at Patuxent River, MD.

That support, integrated into the daily actions of the Joint Program Office team, made it possible to create the adjusted realistic program plan and is critical to future dependable program performance. The performance of the F-35 industry team for the Department of Defense and our allies – in engineering and testing fundamentals, in business fundamentals and in sustainment – will be successful to the degree our government technical knowledge workforce remains intimately involved in the program every step of the way.

I carry within me an understanding that what people believe about the F-35 is affected, and depends in some measure upon, what I believe and what I transparently communicate about the program. So let me begin with what I believe about the F-35.

I believe the F-35 is a critical presence in the combined force battle space. It makes many other systems and capabilities and effects better because of the presence of the F-35 sensors. It is a critical presence in many nations as a powerful combined force capability to act and protect likeminded nations that want their people to live safe from aggression and in freedom and opportunity.

I believe the F-35 is a bond of joint strength across our US services. It is a bond of capability and a bond economically across many nations, that raises the level of technology benefit in our militaries and our industries.

I believe the F-35 is an assurance of powerful effectiveness. It is an assurance of immediate powerful effectiveness as soon as it is initially fielded, and it is the best possible growth platform to incorporate future advances in weapons, sensors and networks for the next decades ahead. It is an assurance for the men and women in all our services, and those we are still raising, who will volunteer to serve something greater than themselves – that they will succeed in every mission and then return home safely to their loved ones.

With that context, it is less “what keeps me awake at night” and more “what makes me eager to be at work every day.”

The F-35 has schedule and budget realism going forward. It is transparent in the discovery and correction of issues arising in test that are typical in all fighter aircraft development. The Service systems commands are closely involved and contributing to the correction of issues in view now and that will arise in remaining test. That creates confidence in delivering required capability, suitable and effective from the sea and around the world.

There is data and demonstrated performance in hand that gives confidence the F-35 basic design is sound and has clear potential to deliver the capability we expect. There is a lot of test ahead. Integrating the systems and sensors and expanding the envelope will bring discovery that sound systems engineering will solve.

There has been very good engine and airframe contractor responsiveness and progress in many areas since we appeared before your committee last year. STOVL flight test met plans and expectations and completed a highly successful initial sea trial aboard USS WASP. In addition to the impressive stability, control and performance of the STOVL in slow flight and vertical landing, the F-35 has flown to its maximum speed and hardest turn limits. It is a testimony to the very effective and impressive marriage of engine and airframe.

Three leading program issues occupy my focus for 2012. Technical and cost issues and challenges certainly exist. All are being worked. I mention here what are the “critical and significant few” that – if successfully advanced – will bring beneficial tail wind for the entire program and genuine value for the Department and our partner nations.

1. Software development performance and its dependable delivery of capability
2. Concurrency change incorporation improvement and delivery of affordable full service life jets
3. Production Quality and its ultimate result on affordable price for the US and our allies

All three have a common fundamental that will advance the external result and performance, and keep reality clearly in view. Systems engineering based closed loop analysis and corrective action will be required in steady and committed execution throughout the industry team – primes and suppliers.

Rigorous management control by the Joint Program Office, supported by the service Systems Commands, will be applied with a development dial on production, reality and data based negotiations and - focus on affordable delivered capability, which is our only meaningful external result. Presently in the program, performance is all that matters.

I look forward to your questions.

