LOCKHEED REAFFIRMS F-35 PRODUCTION TARGET DESPITE SUPPLIER STATEMENT

News / Manufacturer

Lockheed Martin has **re-affirmed** the full-rate **production** goal for the **F-35** programme remains 17 aircraft per month, despite a supplier's statement on 7 October that it is significantly less.

Full rate production volume is factored into the production learning curves that drive Lockheed's cost reduction targets for the F-35. In the early years of the programme, Lockheed expected to build 20 F-35s per month by 2016, or nearly one per working day.

But programme delays and spending deferrals trimmed Lockheed's full-rate production target to 17 aircraft monthly by the mid-2020s, compared to a current rate of about three per month.

Lockheed supplier Alcoa, however, issued a press release on 7 October announcing its selection

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to provide titanium on all F-35s produced over the next nine years.

The statement adds that its selection supports “Lockheed Martin’s full-rate production goal of 13 aircraft a month by the mid-2020s”, Alcoa says.

A rate of 13 per month implies an annual rate of 156 F-35s. That tracks with the international programme’s near-term plan to increase F-35 deliveries about 35 aircraft per year to 150-170 aircraft by 2019, but falls short of Lockheed’s stated goal to reach about 204 F-35 deliveries per year.

Despite the statement by Alcoa, the full rate production target for the programme has not changed, Lockheed says.

“I can’t speak for [Alcoa], but our target remains 17,” the company says.

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