

F-35 to Hover Soon

The short takeoff and vertical landing F-35 Joint Strike Fighter will hover for the first time in 4-6 weeks, says Pratt & Whitney Vice President for military programs Tom Farmer. Six more flights are needed before the first Stovl JSF is ready for that milestone.

This year, Pratt (and its Rolls-Royce partner for the Stovl engine version) expect service release of that configuration. The approval is already in hand for the conventional takeoff and landing F135.

Farmer says that the engine is not at issue in the current dust up over JSF program performance. While there were four items of concerns the program office had previously identified, including clutch heating and turbine blade problems, those have been resolved, he says.

He also vowed that Pratt & Whitney will meet cost targets for the 250th production engine. Some extra funding to assure the target can be met has yet to be secured, though.

Meanwhile, Pratt is in talks with the U.S. government over the fourth lot of engine production. Pratt has offered to guarantee the engine costs for that lot, effectively turning the cost-plus contract into a firm-fixed-price deal.

Posted by [Robert Wall](#) at 2/3/2010 1:12 AM CST