

Battle looming over costly F-35 programme

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is the Pentagon's most expensive weapons acquisition ever, and the stealthy jet could be seen as a big target for cost cutting when U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office

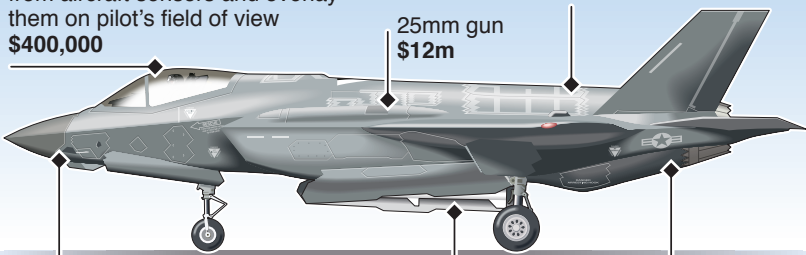
ESTIMATED COSTS (F-35A)

Helmet: LCD displays take input from aircraft sensors and overlay them on pilot's field of view

\$400,000

Airframe: Structural composites form 35 percent of weight. Skin embedded with radar-absorbing "fibre mat". **\$65m**

25mm gun
\$12m



Avionics: Include phased array radar, precision targeting system and 360° situational awareness sensors. **\$16m**

Weapons: Internal bays can carry four AIM-120 air-to-air missiles
\$1.1m per missile

Engine: Single Pratt & Whitney F135 turbofan
\$13m

TEN LARGEST PENTAGON PROGRAMMES IN 2015

By acquisition cost, \$bn (FY 2016)

◆ Initial estimate

Change since initial estimate

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter	◆	340	48%
Arleigh Burke-class destroyer	◆	115	619%
Virginia-class submarine	◆	91	40%
V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft	◆	62	44%
EELV*	◆	61	221%
Trident II missile	◆	58	4%
KC-46 aerial tanker	◆	44	-8%
Ford-class aircraft carrier	◆	36	-5%
P-8A maritime aircraft	◆	33	-1%
UH-60M helicopter	◆	26	86%

F-35 unit cost
(as of Dec 2014)
\$138 million
Includes research and development

*Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (boosters for military satellite deployment)

Sources: U.S. Government Accountability Office, Forecast International, Gizmodo © GRAPHIC NEWS