Lockheed Martin Uses 5th Gen Fighter to Command Drone in Flight

November 19, 2025

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev., Nov. 19, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin Skunk Works® (NYSE: LMT), with industry partners and the U.S. Air Force, controlled an uncrewed aerial system (UAS) from the cockpit of a 5th Gen fighter while in flight.



During the flight out of Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, an F-22 Raptor pilot successfully used an open interface in the cockpit to send control directions to another airborne UAS.

"This effort represents Skunk Works driving a breakthrough in air combat capability, where single-seat aircraft command and control drones with simple and intuitive interfaces in the cockpit," said OJ Sanchez, vice president and general manager, Lockheed Martin Skunk Works.

The F-22 pilot used a pilot vehicle interface (PVI) to command the drone to execute a specific mission profile. The PVI represents a flexible system to provide integration-ready capabilities for both current and future platforms.

This event demonstrates human-machine teaming capabilities and the future of air combat, today. Lockheed Martin has been focused on the transformative power of autonomous and AI-enabled operations in crewed and uncrewed systems for years, with particular focus on integrating autonomous drones with the F-22 and F-35.

This flight event and other ongoing evaluations are crucial steps in realizing the Air Force's family of systems vision. Human-machine teaming enhances situational awareness, interoperability, survivability and flexibility, unlocking a significant advantage for the U.S. Air Force. By integrating the F-22 with other advanced systems we're bolstering the capabilities of our warfighters, ensuring American airpower dominance.

Lockheed Martin's proactive approach to building, testing and improving 5th Gen teaming capabilities is at the forefront of innovation, demonstrating the future of air combat today.

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