Boeing Demonstrates Lean Practices on Joint Strike Fighter

The Joint Strike Fighter X-32A concept demonstrator has become a symbol of how Boeing is exploiting lean design and manufacturing techniques to produce affordable military aircraft. Three-dimensional solid modeling and assembly simulation, laser-guided part positioning and minimal tooling are some of the advanced approaches Boeing plans to carry forward into the next phase of the JSF program. Thanks to these and other "lean" concepts, overall X-32 fabrication and assembly costs remain at 30 to 40 percent below projections that are already low compared to previous aircraft development programs. Also, thanks largely to digital design processes, no unplanned shimming has been required in the assembly of the X-32A. Workers attached the X-32A wing to the fusel in late May, and subsystems installation and fit checks of the landing gear and vertical tails are underway. First flight is scheduled for Spring of 2000. Boeing is competing to build the JSF under a four-year joint U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps concept demonstration contract.

###