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BAE Systems has delivered the 1,000th rear fuselage to Lockheed Martin for the F-35, the world's most advanced and capable fifth generation fighter.

More than 1,500 employees at the Company's facilities in Samlesbury, Lancashire, produce the rear fuselage for every F-35 in the global fleet. The first fuselage was delivered to Lockheed Martin in 2005.

Speech marks at an event today celebrating the 1000th delivery, Cliff Robson, Group Managing Director, BAE Systems Air, said:

"This is a significant moment for everyone involved in the programme and a testament to the highly-skilled workforce we have in the North West of England.

"Our role on the F-35 programme is another example of how we make a substantial contribution to the local and national UK

economy and help to deliver capability which is critical for national security.”

Speech marks Bridget Lauderdale, Lockheed Martin Vice President and General Manager of the F-35 programme, said:

“The F-35 programme powers economic growth and prosperity for the UK injecting approximately £41billion* into the UK economy and supporting more than 20,000 jobs in the UK supply chain, many of those based in the North West.

“With more than 500 companies in our UK supply chain, we’re proud of the role that our partnership with BAE Systems has in delivering the world’s most advanced aircraft for the UK and 17 other allied nations.”

F-35 aircraft inside hangar BAE Systems has been involved in the F-35 programme since its inception and plays key roles across the development, manufacture and sustainment of the aircraft, which is operated by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and air forces across the world.

The F-35s global programme of record amounts to more than 3,000 F-35s amongst the programme’s 17 customers. Work on the programme will continue at BAE Systems’ advanced manufacturing hub at Samlesbury for many years to come.

Speech marks Susan Addison, Senior Vice President for US Programmes at BAE Systems Air, said:

“This is an important milestone for our business and demonstrates both the expertise of our people and their commitment to delivering for the F-35 programme.

“The roles we play today are underpinned by a world-class manufacturing pedigree and industrial know-how in the UK, which has been developed through decades of cutting edge experience in combat air programmes. We are proud of what we

do for our customers and the air forces who help keep us safe.”