

Intro:

Putting a man on the moon cost about \$170 billion when adjusted to today's dollars. But getting the military's next generation fighter jet, the F-35, off the ground is proving to be an even bigger hassle. How big?

Try 400 billion dollars...

//Title page: Should the F-35 be grounded permanently

But before that, you may be asking, what is an f35?

Part 1: The Jet

The F35 is the U.S. military's latest multirole 5-th generation stealth fighter that is set to ensure the United States and Allies Air capabilities for the battlefield of the future.

//Clip of a walk around an F35

And futuristic this plane is... This plane is fast,

//F35 flying

its stealthy

//Lockheed's stealth tech or its invisibility on the radar

it can hover,

// hover landing

it carries a deadly precise weapons payload

// weapons payload

And its advanced technically ensures its place among the fifth generation fighters of tomorrow

//overview of the F35 targeting helmet

This jet is set to replace F-16 Falcon, the F/A-18 Hornet, the AV-8B Harrier and the A-10 Warthog. All of which are more than 30 years old

SO I guess you can see why this plane has such a high price tag

But at a staggering 400 billion, this project is also the most expensive military project in history.

//view of top ten list of the most expensive military projects in history

Part 2: The Issues

Many countries besides the United States, such as Canada, Britain, Israel, and Australia have already placed orders to acquire the F-35 but have now begun to question if this jet was really worth the investment

//clip of politician arguing against the F35

This price tag is phenomenal!

Over its life span the F-35 will use up close to 1.4 billion dollars

To make matters worse, the price tag is not the only issue...

//senator reading list of issues

The United States, along with other NATO nations seemed to have been really eager to try out this new toy to the point that they rushed its development

The manufacturer of the F-35, Lockheed Martin, under pressure, decided to continue developing the F-35 while simultaneously beginning the production of this fifth generation.

//maybe use this

You may be familiar with Lockheed Martin or some of their other works such as F-16, F-22, the C-130 and the U-2 spy plane

//maybe

Rushed development yielded a product that was not yet fully baked led to many design and software issues. The cost

These issues were not, by any means, small either.

//DOD list of issues

Some of these issues were that

the pilot ejection seat was prone to failure,

the fuel tank needed to be redesigned,

despite its name, the F-35 Lightning was particularly vulnerable to lightning strikes

The advanced 400,000 dollar helmet had software bugs

Deficiency in the software caused various flight operation delays

“It Cant Dog Fight”

Dog fighting is a component of aerial combat that is almost as old as airplanes themselves. It occurs when aircraft come into close proximity with one another and attempt to neutralize the opponent.

//world war I dog fight clips

Nowadays, dog fights are much less common, but they do occur once in awhile

//f-15 dog fight

It came to many as a huge surprise when the futuristic F-35 was defeated in a mock dogfight with a 40 year old f-16, one of the fighter jets the F-35 was set to replace.

//Document of the issues with is

In a document released by the pentagon that talked about the results of the dog fight, the pilot flying the F-35 concluded that the was at a distinct energy disadvantage and that it was not effective at killing or surviving attacks.

The helmet also proved to be too bulky to allow the pilot to remain in visual contact with the F-16

If the F-35 lost against a 40 year old F-16, what will happen if it has to go up against other developing fifth generation fighters such as the Russian Sukhoi PAK FA or the chinese

Shenyang J-31

Now in the F-35's defense, it was missing some of it key components and software enhancements that were still being perfected so maybe if it had been fully functional, this dog fight would have been a cakewalk.

But still, this is an embarrassment considering that the F-35's cousin, the F-22 was able to defeat not 1, not 2, but 5 F-15s in a dog fight.

On a side note: The F-22 had its production cancelled in favor of the F-35

“Ridiculous to think that one jet can replace them all”

The worst part of the f-35 is that it was designed to fill three seperate rolls to save cost But that decision resulted in costly delays and a flawed design.

When it comes to fighter jets, one size does not fit them all.

When you design a plane that is good at bombing, at air superiority fighting, and at close air support, you end up making something that has compromises on all these fronts.

The designer of the F-16 and the A-10 highlights where many of these compromises occur

//clip of pierre spreya

Some of the key points to highlight is that the F-35 is heavier than most jets meaning that it won't be able to maneuver as lighter fighter jets

Its shorter wing span for vertical landing means that it doesn't have the ability to carry a larger payload

Its stealth technology is great but it limits the weapons it can carry for close air support.

The air force variant has an internal cannon, but it might not be as effective as the A-10's massive 30 mm gatling gun

The F-35 also has a smaller fuel tank meaning that it will not be able to support troops for too long before having to go back and refuel.

The F-35 is good at everything meaning that it does not excel at one thing which might prove as a fatal flaw. It's spreading itself too thin!

This is an even scarier considering the fact that the F-35 will be the workhorse of the Air force, the navy, and the marines for the next 50 years

Conclusion

The F-35 has way too much momentum and resources behind it to be stopped dead in its tracks.

However, This aircraft has many issues,

//burnt F-35

It is highly complex and has many failure points

It cannot compete with older planes

It just doesn't fill the needs of the air force, navy, and the marines at the same time

I believe that this jet should go the way of its cousin the F-22, and have its production halted after the ones that have gone into production are built.

I know this sounds like a huge waste, but it really isn't. The weapon and radar systems as well as the stealth technology that went into the F-35 can be repurposed to develop other aircrafts that have more specific roles in where they can excel in it.

And this is not something that is unheard of. A lot of the technology from the F-22 was used on the F-35, and a lot of the technology used on the F-22 came from the F-117.

Continuation of the F-35 will not only cost the U.S. Trillions, but it may also cost them control of the skies, as well as countless lives.

Sources

NPR

CONAN: And is there any way to know if the F-35 can compete with the top-of-the-line aircraft from China and Russia?

ABRAMSON: Well, it's tough for you and me and for the listeners to know whether it can actually compete, because some of these critics' information is based on obscure computer modeling of how the F-35 would compete against the Sukhoi or other advanced fighters from places like Russia and China, that are actually working on this technology. What the military says is that this plane does very well against all planes that are out there, and that the craft that we're talking about right now for - that Russia and China are working on, are still in the experimental phase, and that their airplanes really cannot do the variety of tasks that we were talking about.

So in addition to being a very good, if not excellent air superiority, dog-fighting kind of plane, the F-35 can also do ground support. So it can accompany troops into combat, basically, the way the famous A-10 Warthog would. It's also a carrier plane. It's also a plane that can do a vertical takeoff and vertical landings and short runway takeoffs, which the Marines need. So it has so many attributes, they say, that should really overcome any concerns about whether it's truly terrific in any one field.

Bringing the cost down due to less service parts