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Improved UK Testing facilities for Joint Combat Aircraft

A simulation facility, 'Cutlass', has been built at Abbey Wood, Bristol courtesy of scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). The facility has already helped to improve the understanding of how the Joint Combat Aircraft (JCA) will be used and has increased the UK's influence on the programme.

The UK will soon need to select a variant of the US Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) to meet the requirement for the JCA – a decision that will significantly affect UK capabilities. The MOD therefore required a deeper understanding of the concepts of operation and tactics likely to be used by JSF in a range of scenarios.

To help define JCA's requirements, Dstl built Cutlass, which is a 'man-in-the-loop' simulation facility. Cutlass brings together both technical performance and aspects of using the aircraft, its systems and weapons in a realistic situation.

David Harray, a Dstl scientist said: "In one trial, aircrew flew the Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) and Carrier (CV) variants of the JSF in five missions. The results supported both an Investment Approvals Board review and the STOVL JSF critical design review. The UK now has a better understanding how the different JSF variants match JCA's requirements and the simulation facility has enhanced UK influence within the JSF project."

End

Notes to Editors

Dstl (the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory) is the centre of scientific excellence for the Ministry of Defence, housing one of the largest groups of scientists and engineers in public service in the country. Its 3,500 strong workforce includes some of the nation's most talented and creative scientists with the brief to ensure that the UK Armed Forces and Government are supported in-house by world class scientific advice. Dstl delivers defence research, specialist technical services and the ability to track global technological developments. Its capabilities compare with the best in the world, supporting defence policy making and operations and procurement decisions. For more information visit www.dstl.gov.uk

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