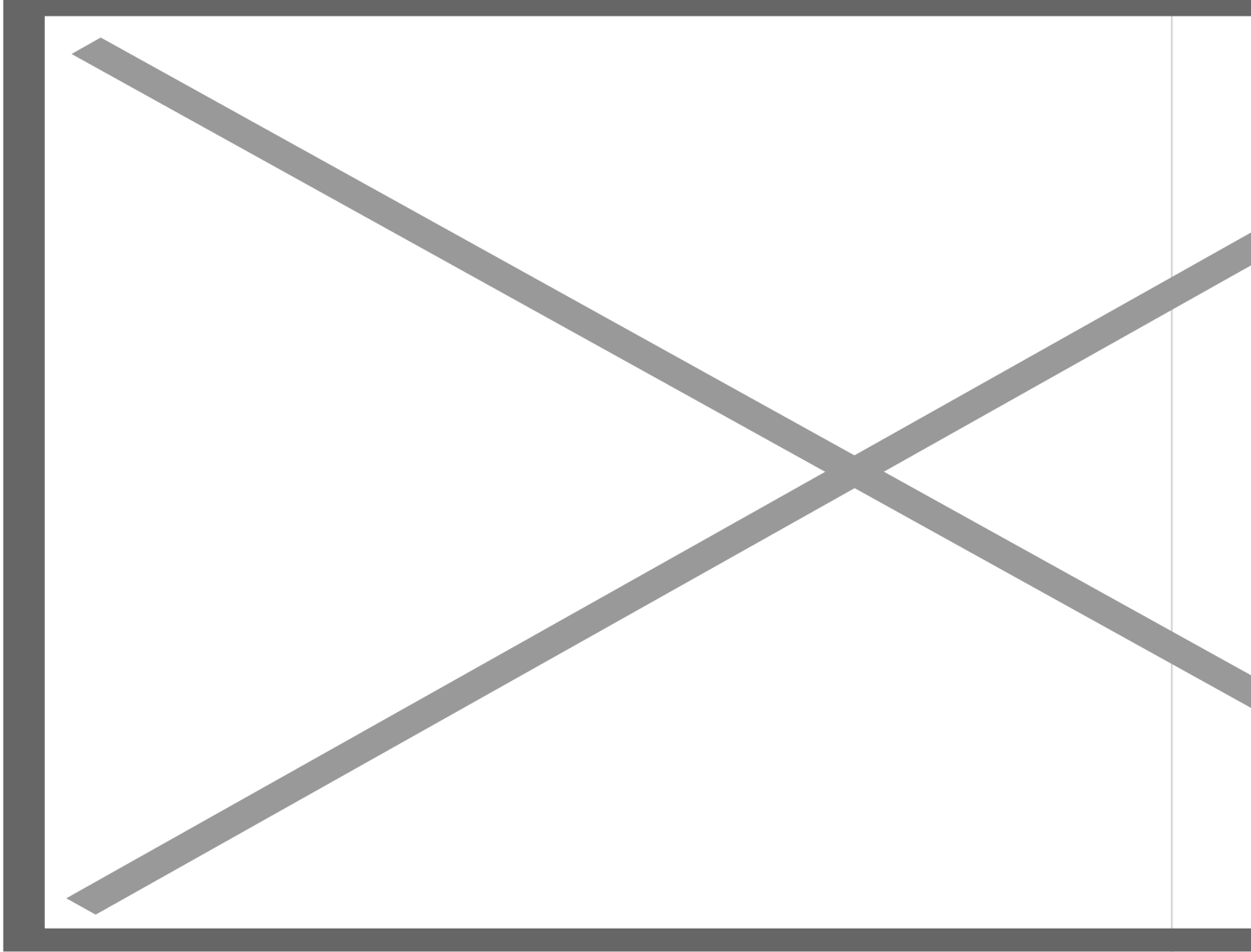


# *Pentagon awards \$7.8 billion F-35 contract modification to Lockheed Martin*

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An F-35 jetfighter costs millions of dollars???

Washington, January 4 (RHC)-- The U.S. Defense Department has awarded a \$7.8 billion contract modification for F-35 aircraft to Lockheed Martin Corp. "This modification adds scope to procure 127 F-35 Lot 16 aircraft," the Pentagon said in a statement issued in Washington, DC.

Armed with stealth technology, advanced sensors, weapons capacity, and range, the F-35 is the most lethal, survivable, and connected fighter aircraft ever built, according to the Lockheed Martin website. The military contractor delivered a total of 142 F-35 fighter jets to the US and its allies last year, three more than originally planned.

The F-35 fighters are currently being deployed to Eastern Europe in the wake of Russia's military operation in Ukraine, which has alarmingly escalated tensions between Moscow and Washington.

According to the Bloomberg report, six F-35s from the Air Forces 34th Fighter Squadron are flying "air policing" missions from Estonia and Romania.

The United States and the Israeli regime have grounded a number of their F-35 stealth warplanes after a crash involving a model of the aircraft. Reporting from Washington, The Hill cited an official from the F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO) as saying that the U.S. military had grounded an unspecified number of the planes after the December 15th incident.

The incident which has been shared widely across social media, saw an F-35B crashing on the runway at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth in Texas as it was reportedly undergoing a test of its hovering capabilities. The pilot ejected safely before the crash, which took place as the plane was landing vertically.

Seven U.S. sailors were injured last week in a Navy F-35C fighter "landing mishap" on an aircraft carrier in the South China Sea, the Navy said. According to The Hill, there have been several other F-35 incidents over the past year, including an accident that involved the fifth-generation fighter aircraft crashing into the ocean in January.

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