

## With Raytheon Out, Leonardo DRS Touts Lower-Cost T-100

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### ***T-100: Leonardo***

With Leonardo's North American arm replacing Raytheon as prime, the T-100 bid for the U.S. Air Force's coveted \$16 billion T-X contract will come in at a lower price, according to a top company executive.

Consolidating the T-100 integrator and airframe manufacturer under one roof streamlines the proposal's management structure, said Bill Lynn, CEO of Leonardo DRS, formerly DRS Technologies. Meanwhile, a smaller company means fewer layers of bureaucracy and less overhead, he noted.

"I think that with DRS as the prime, we will have a leaner cost and overhead structure than a bigger company might have," Lynn said. "I think this bid will be more cost-competitive as a consequence of the team and the structure that we're bidding it under."

Leonardo DRS is the new U.S. face of the T-100 bid, which has been on shaky ground in recent months. Reports emerged late last year of disagreements between Raytheon and Leonardo, and Raytheon officially dropped out earlier this year. Leonardo announced that U.S.-based DRS would take the helm in February.

Leonardo DRS plans to stand up a new U.S. facility to build the T-100, which is based on the Alenia Aermacchi—now Leonardo—M-346 trainer. Building a new facility from scratch creates construction and manufacturing jobs, Lynn stressed.

T-100 final assembly as well as some component manufacturing will take place at the U.S. facility, he said.

Lynn declined to say where the facility will be, but anticipates an announcement later this month. Raytheon planned to build the T-100 in Meridian, Mississippi.

Lynn touted the T-100 as a "customer-proven system," noting that the M-346 has been selected over the competing Lockheed Martin-Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) T-50 in four

out of five recent international trainer competitions: Israel, Singapore, Poland, and the United Arab Emirates. The fifth was Indonesia, which selected the T-50. Leonardo has already delivered 30 aircraft for the Israeli air force, which is using the aircraft to train future F-35 pilots.

“Given the opportunity to choose, the customers have overwhelmingly chosen the M-346,” Lynn said.

The T-100’s training system is also proven, Lynn stressed. The company has been successfully using live, virtual, constructive (LVC) training—in which real and simulated aircraft fly together—for years.

“We don’t believe any of our competitors have an operational, proven LVC training capability,” Lynn said.

Bids are due to the Air Force in the next few weeks, with a contract award for 350 aircraft expected by year’s end. Boeing and Saab are offering a clean-sheet design, while Lockheed Martin is partnered with Korea Aerospace Industries on the T-50A.

While Leonardo is focused on winning the T-X competition, the company will also look at offering a variant of the M-346—likely the M-346 fighter trainer—for the Air Force’s OA-X light attack flight demonstration, which could lead to a 300-aircraft buy.

Proposals are due in April.