



related tactics and employment of the F-117 in conjunction with the F-22. Preparations started in FY05, this test also being aimed at exploring ways to defeat emerging threats by using better tactics and different formation tactics, paint schemes, strike force compositions, jamming efforts and so on. Flight-testing was approved for FY06. This was a lead-in test helping to support the Global Strike TD&E effort, part of a USAF doctrine ensuring a global strike capability. Global Strike TD&E phase 1 was successfully completed in the summer of 2006, but as both tests were cancelled for Det 1, the Dragon Test Team was unable to demonstrate the advances made using this scheme and future tactics.

In FY06, tests continued on F-117 OFP-87 Combined DT/OT/FDE to expedite its fielding. Upon completion, Det 1 made the fielding recommendation, which was formally accepted on August 9, 2006.

Tests were finalized last year for F-117 Target Area Planning versions 17 and 18. The latter was recommended for fielding in August, together with the final release of the F-117 Mission Planning Environment — Life Cycle Upgrade, version 8.1.4. Follow-on testing continued for the F-117 Cockpit NVIS program, running from September 15-22, 2005, with the night portion being finalized at Palmdale between July 10-13, 2006. This resulted in even better cockpit lighting with the latest version (NVIS-spiral 1) fielded in August 2006 and the Dragon is currently the only aircraft in the inventory with production NVIS cockpit lights installed.

right: A member of the Dragon Test Team's groundcrew checks a JDAM weapon prior to an OT&E sortie.

F-117 Time Sensitive Targeting TD&E carried on, continuing from FY05 in which an upgraded communications suite was proposed for the F-117 with a Dual-Radio capability that has better frequency agility and different frequency ranges including FM, VHF and UHF. This was to be combined with SATCOM with all related antennas being low-observable (LO). The LO Dual Radio was (and still is) required by the Nighthawk as employment and tactics have changed over the years and the F-117 is required to integrate with conventional strike packages, support aircraft and special operations forces both in the air and on the ground. This requires the ability to communicate on and monitor multiple frequencies at the same time. Using the Dual Radios, the pilot would be able to receive and transmit target, threat and other critical mission data on two UHF channels simultaneously. This would also

allow the development of advanced tactics to support time-sensitive targeting.

The LO SATCOM antenna project would extend the F-117's ability to receive and transmit dynamic targeting data from beyond line of sight locations to a point much closer to the target area. The ground mission planning phase of the FY06 TST test program was finalized and flight-testing with the Dual Radio had already started when the next phase was cancelled as a result of the decision to phase out the type. This would have included flight tests with live weapons to be used against moving targets at the McGregor range with real-time targeting, utilizing Special Forces and UAVs to support laser operations and a datalink with over-the-horizon communications. As the unit was unable to conclude these important tests, it is unlikely that this modification package will be integrated into the operational fleet. However,

