

The Air Force, having already announced its intent to bed down its first overseas combat-ready F-35 unit in the Asia-Pacific region, is now determining the most suitable location, said Gen. Hawk Carlisle, Pacific Air Forces commander. Speaking to reporters in Washington, D.C., on July 29, Carlisle said he expects the Air Force to down select from the nine available PACAF bases to four this fall, and then pick the preferred location and reasonable alternative "after the turn of the year." Eielson AFB, Alaska, will likely fare "very well" due to its training airspace and existing infrastructure, he said. Eielson also provides rapid access to northeast Asia, he said. Other possible locations are: Kadena AB, Japan; Misawa AB, Japan; Kunsan AB, South Korea; and Osan AB, South Korea, said Carlisle. The choices are "pretty limited" when looking at the nine bases, he said. "We won't put [the F-35] in Hawaii because we already have the F-22s there," he said, noting that the same applies to JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, which is home to two F-22 squadrons. Andersen AFB, Guam, is "not really optimum," plus "the marines are going there," he said. Further, "We won't put it in Yokota [AB, Japan,] because that's where the C-130s are," he said.