

Performance Improvements of an F-15 Airplane with an Integrated Engine-Flight Control System

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An integrated flight and propulsion control system has been developed and flight demonstrated on the NASA Ames-Dryden F-15 research aircraft. The highly integrated digital control (HIDEC) system provides additional engine thrust by increasing engine pressure ratio (EPR) at intermediate and afterburning power. The amount of EPR uptrim is modulated based on airplane maneuver requirements, flight conditions, and engine information. Engine thrust was increased as much as 10.5% at subsonic flight conditions by uptrimming EPR. The additional thrust significantly improved aircraft performance. Rate of climb was increased 14% at 40,000 ft and the time to climb from 10,000 to 40,000 ft was reduced 13%. A 14% increase in acceleration at 40,000 ft and 24% increase at 50,000 ft was obtained at intermediate and maximum power, respectively. The HIDEC logic performed fault free. No engine anomalies were encountered for EPR increases up to 12% and for angles of attack and sideslip of 32 and 11 deg, respectively.

Nomenclature

AJ	= exhaust nozzle area, ft ²
D	= inlet distortion
$N1$	= fan speed, rpm
$N1C2$	= corrected fan speed, rpm
Ps	= specific excess power, ft/s
$PS2$	= static pressure at fan inlet, psia
$PT2$	= total pressure at fan inlet, psia
$PT6$	= total pressure at turbine, psia
$TT2$	= total temperature at fan inlet, °F
WA	= corrected engine airflow, lb/s
$WACC$	= corrected fan airflow, lb/s
α	= angle of attack, deg
β	= angle of sideslip, deg
Δ	= incremental change

Introduction

SUBSTANTIAL performance gains can be obtained by integrating the flight and propulsion control systems.¹ By using the high throughput and large memory of current onboard computers, along with high-speed communication data buses, it will be possible to implement a wide range of integrated flight and propulsion control modes onboard future aircraft. Such modes will increase total vehicle effectiveness without significant weight or cost penalties. Independent optimization of each control system is usually compromised by worst case assumptions of other systems. To investigate the problem associated with integration and to quantify the performance benefits, NASA Ames Research Center's Dryden Flight Research Facility is conducting a program called highly integrated electronic control (HIDEC). One feature in the HIDEC program is the advanced engine control system (ADECS).²

In a conventional engine control system, the engine stall margin is large enough to accommodate the worst case combination of engine and airplane induced disturbances. In the ADECS, the stall margin is modulated in real time based on the current engine and aircraft requirements and flight conditions. This permits the unneeded stall margin to be traded for increased engine performance by increasing thrust, reducing fuel flow, or lowering operating temperatures. The exchange between unneeded engine stall margin and increased engine performance is implemented by uptrimming the engine pressure ratio (EPR). The performance benefits obtained by reducing engine stall margin were predicted and presented by Burcham et al.³

A flight evaluation of the ADECS feature was conducted at the Ames-Dryden Flight Research Facility on an F-15 airplane. An evaluation of the performance of the F-15 aircraft with one engine equipped with a HIDEC system was presented by Myers and Walsh.⁴

This paper presents results of the evaluation with the two HIDEC engines, the ADECS system description, flight test procedures, engine thrust gains, and aircraft performance improvements.

System Description

Airplane

The NASA F-15 airplane is being used for the HIDEC program. The F-15 is a high-performance air superiority fighter with excellent transonic maneuverability and has a maximum Mach number capability of 2.5. It is powered by two afterburning turbofan engines.

Engine

The F100 engine model derivative (EMD) engines⁵ are an upgraded version of the F100-PW-100 engine that currently powers the production F-15 airplanes. These two engines were built by Pratt & Whitney (West Palm Beach, Florida) and have a company designation of PW 1128. The engines incorporate a redesigned fan, revised compressor and combustor, single crystal turbine blades and vanes, a 16-segment augmentor with light-off detector, and a digital electronic engine control (DEEC).

The DEEC, as discussed by Burcham et al.,⁶ is a key part of the HIDEC system. It is a full-authority digital control with an integral hydromechanical backup control. It controls the gas generator and the augmentor fuel flows, compressor bleeds, variable inlet guide vanes, variable stators, and the variable

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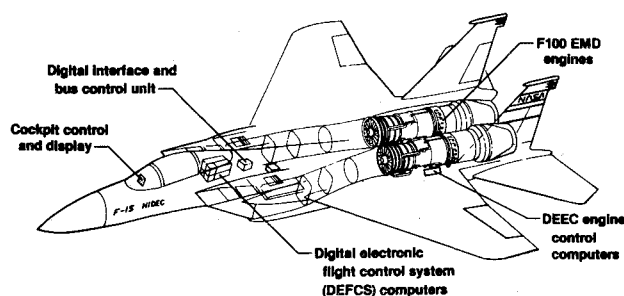


Fig. 1 Features of the F-15 research airplane.

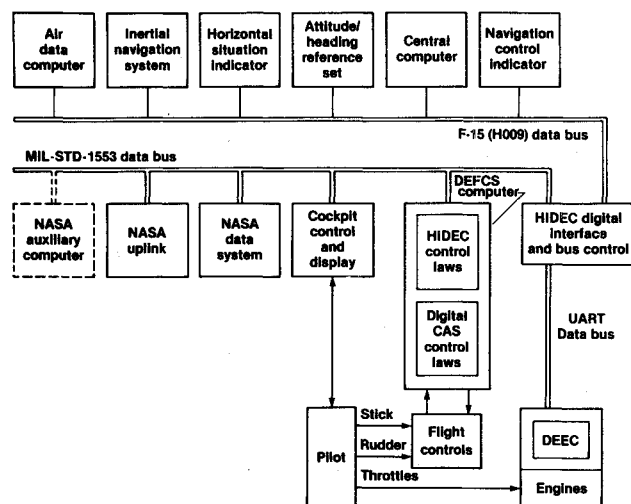


Fig. 2 Block diagram of the HIDECS system.

exhaust nozzle. The DEEC logic provides closed-loop control of corrected fan airflow ($WACC$) and EPR. It also limits fan turbine inlet temperature (FTIT). It has been modified for the HIDECS program to accept inputs from the airplane.

Highly Integrated Electronic Control System

The equipment and features used for the HIDECS program⁷ are shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The two main features of the HIDECS program were the DEEC engine controller and the digital electronic flight control system (DEFCS). The DEFCS is a digital implementation of the analog control augmentation system (CAS) and has the same flight control authority as the analog CAS. The DEFCS communicates with the DEEC through a digital interface and bus control unit. The pilot makes inputs to the HIDECS system using the cockpit control and display units. The ADECS uptrim control law software is in the digital flight control computer (DFCC), which is part of the DEFCS.

A block diagram of the HIDECS system on the F-15 is shown in Fig. 2. The various digital systems on the airplane use three separate data buses to communicate with each other through a digital interface and bus controller. This unit permits the HIDECS system to communicate with the F-15 H009 data bus, the universal asynchronous receiver transmitter (UART) data bus from the DEEC, and the MIL-STD-1553A flight control data bus. The normal throttle inputs from the cockpit to the DEEC controller and the backup engine control are maintained.

An ADECS block diagram is shown in Fig. 3. The airplane data is used to estimate the angles of attack α and sideslip β . This information, along with the corrected engine airflow WA , allows the calculation of inlet distortion D and the amount of incremental change in EPR for maximum stability uptrim ($\Delta EPRS$). Another calculation uses engine parameters to determine the amount of EPR for optimum performance

($\Delta EPRP$). The lower value of the two EPR uptrim commands, with a pilot-selectable EPR multiplier (KEPR), is then sent to the DEEC, which implements the uptrim on the engine. The DEEC also contains an upper limit of allowable uptrim for safety.

The amount of EPR uptrim allowable depends on the available excess stall margin of the engine. The F-15/F100 EMD engine combination has substantial excess stall margin at moderate inlet distortion levels. The stall margin allowance for normal engine operation is shown in Fig. 4 and consists of the following: engine-to-engine allowances for the manufacturing tolerance in building the engine, engine control tolerance allowance, Reynolds number (altitude) effects, inlet distortion allowance for maneuvering up to extreme angles of attack and sideslip, allowance for lighting and cancelling the augmentor segments, and any remaining allowance for uncertainty.

The stall margin available during ADECS operation, also shown in Fig. 4, consists of the same engine-to-engine, control system, and Reynolds number allowances as for normal operation. With ADECS, however, the inlet distortion allowance is reduced to the amount required for the current aircraft altitude and flight condition, as opposed to the worst case condition. The augmentor sequencing allowance is used at intermediate and maximum power, but is not used during partial afterburning. In most cases, this excess stall margin available for uptrim is approximately 11–13%, depending on flight condition. An arbitrary 4% remaining stall margin for uncertainty was retained.

Engine Pressure Ratio Uptrim Logic

The EPR uptrim logic resides in the DFCC and determines the proper EPR command to send the DEEC to obtain higher thrust.⁸ To accomplish this, two EPRs are calculated: the optimum performance EPR and the limiting stability EPR that accounts for inlet distortion. The lower of these two values is

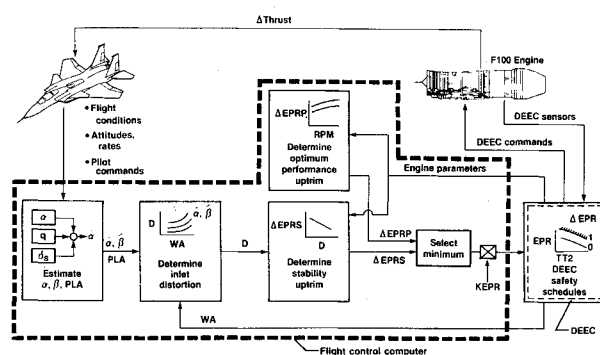


Fig. 3 Block diagram of the adaptive engine control system.

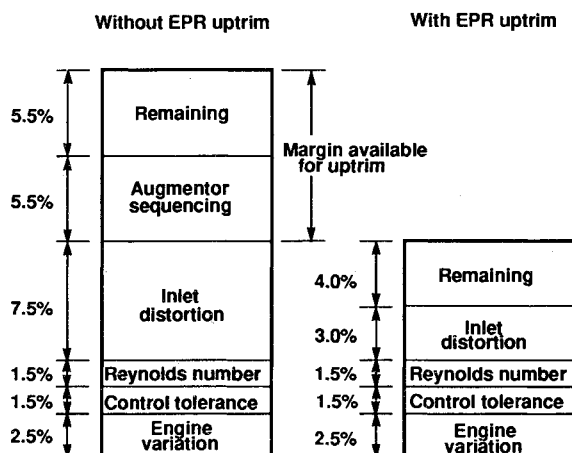


Fig. 4 Stall margin available.

selected as the HIDECE uptrim EPR. This command is passed to the DEEC as a percentage, where it is checked for validity against the DEEC EPR limit. Figure 5 shows the HIDECE EPR uptrim concept on a typical fan map. The stall line is shown as the upper limit. The distance between the stall line and the normal operating line represents the stall margin available. The DEEC EPR limit represents the maximum EPR allowed by the DEEC during uptrim. The stability EPR considers all destabilizing factors that reduce the fan stall margin from the basic steady-state level. As inlet distortion increases, the stability EPR adjusts downward to maintain an adequate stall margin. The optimum performance EPR does not take stall margin into account. It represents the optimum EPR based on predicted thrust gains.

The EPR is first increased along a constant corrected fan speed up to an FTIT °F limit. Upon reaching the FTIT limit, EPR is then uptrimmed along the maximum FTIT limit line. Uptrim along the FTIT limit produces a small additional benefit before thrust begins to decrease because of the reduction in engine airflow. During EPR uptrim, the fan operates closer to the stall line. Therefore, excess fan stall margin, not required for inlet distortion, is traded for additional thrust.

The DEEC responds to the uptrim request by closing the nozzle until the desired EPR is reached. The increase in EPR results in an increase in engine thrust. The uptrim logic is limited to power settings at which the EPR control loop is active, above the 70-deg power lever angle (PLA). When uptrim is requested, the DEEC ramps in the uptrim value over a period of 1 s. This allows for smooth transition to uptrim operation.

A flow diagram of the EPR uptrim logic in the DFCC is shown in Fig. 6. The blocks illustrate schedules and calculations; the arrows indicate the flow of input data.

Optimum Performance Engine Pressure Ratio

The EPR for optimum performance (EPRP) represents EPR at which optimum engine thrust was obtained. It was

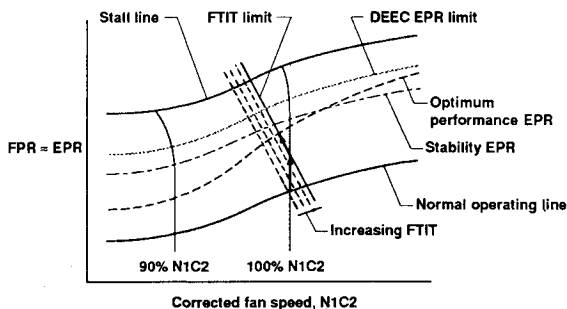


Fig. 5 Engine pressure ratio uptrim concept.

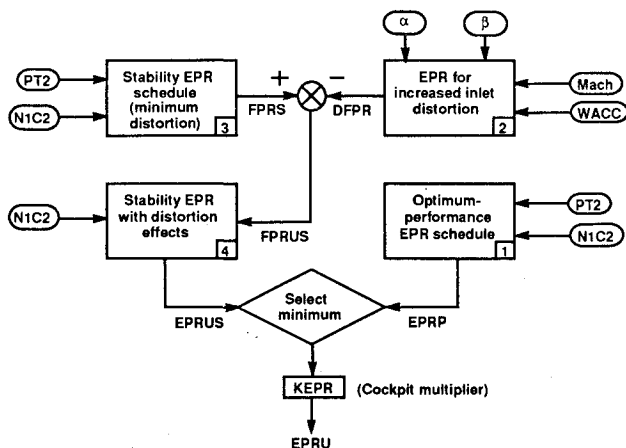


Fig. 6 Engine pressure ratio uptrim logic in the digital flight control computer.

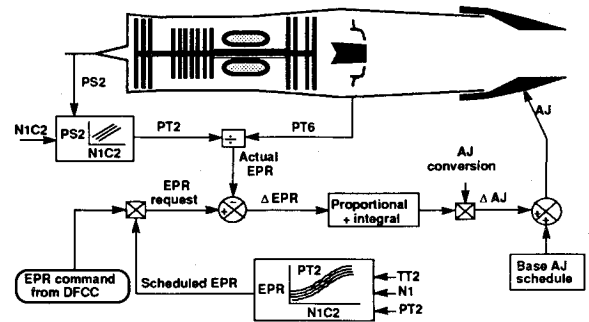


Fig. 7 Digital electronic engine control (DEEC) closed-loop control of engine pressure ratio.

scheduled as a function of corrected fan speed $N1C2$ and total pressure at fan inlet $PT2$, as shown in block 1 of Fig. 6. The schedule was determined from extensive simulation data and denotes the most desirable EPR from a performance standpoint. These data were obtained by using the steady-state engine simulation at a variety of flight conditions. The EPR was increased incrementally for each condition until the peak thrust was reached. This corresponded with the optimum performance EPR.

Although the optimum performance EPR is the most desirable in terms of engine performance, it is often unattainable due to stability considerations and protective limits in the DEEC.

Stability Engine Pressure Ratio

An EPR based on engine stability, which accounts for inlet distortion, was calculated to limit the amount of uptrim during conditions of reduced fan stall margin due to inlet distortion. Inlet distortion increases at low Mach numbers, for reduced inlet airflows, and at high angles of attack or sideslip. Because of this complex relationship, the uptrim stability logic required input from both aircraft and engine parameters to calculate the stability EPR limit.

The stability logic begins in block 2, Fig. 6, by calculating the inlet distortion factor based on aircraft and engine conditions. The inlet distortion factor was obtained by calculating a base distortion factor for the current Mach number and predicted angle of attack. This base value was corrected for effects of sideslip and engine airflow.

The change in fan pressure ratio (DFPR), based on the stall margin sensitivity to the calculated distortion factor, was also calculated in block 2. First, the difference between the calculated distortion factor and the scheduled minimum distortion factor was determined. The minimum distortion factor was scheduled from the current flight Mach number. This differential value of inlet distortion was multiplied by the stall margin sensitivity factor to determine the current sensitivity of stall margin to distortion.

The stability logic used the change in fan pressure ratio to adjust the fan pressure ratio for maximum stability (FPRS). The FPRS was computed in block 3 from the maximum stability engine pressure ratio. The resulting difference between FPRS and DFPR yielded the adjusted maximum stability fan pressure ratio (FPRUS). This value was converted back to an EPR, as shown in block 4. The result was the limiting stability engine pressure ratio (EPRUS) based on distortion. The minimum was selected between EPRUS and EPRP, resulting in the uptrim command EPRU.

Figure 7 shows how the EPR control loop was implemented in the DEEC logic. The EPR uptrim logic resided in the DFCC and determined the proper EPR command to send to the DEEC. In the nonuptrimmed and uptrimmed modes, exhaust nozzle area (AJ) was used to maintain a desired EPR. At high Mach numbers, if the gas generator was operated on the FTIT limit, control was switched to $N1C2$ to protect the inlet mini-

imum airflow and to optimize net propulsive force. The DEEC controlled EPR only between 70-deg PLA and maximum power settings. From idle to 70-deg PLA, nozzle area was set to a fixed value. The scheduled EPR was determined as a function of $N1C2$ and calculated $PT2$. The EPR was then maintained by varying the exhausted nozzle area by means of a proportional plus integral controller to trim a basic schedule. The basic schedule was a function of augmentor fuel-air ratio, total temperature at fan inlet $TT2$, and $PT2$. The $PT2$ was obtained by multiplying the engine inlet static pressure $PS2$ sensed by the engine noseboom probe, by the total-to-static pressure ratio defined as a function of $N1C2$ and $PS2$. During partial afterburning power, 6% was subtracted from the uptrim command to allow for afterburner light off and segment sequencing. The DEEC scheduled EPR was multiplied by the EPR command from the DFCC, as shown in Fig. 7.

Flight Test Procedures

Thirty flights have been flown to assess engine and airplane performance. Intermediate and maximum power constant altitude accelerations were conducted between 10,000 and 50,000 ft. Six intermediate power climbs were completed from 10,000 to 40,000 ft at airspeeds of 250 and 350 kt, and two intermediate power climbs were accomplished from 30,000 to 50,000 ft at Mach 0.9.

To minimize the required corrections for differences in ambient temperatures and aircraft gross weight, the aircraft accelerations and climbs were flown back-to-back, first with ADECS off and then repeated with ADECS on. Upon completion of the ADECS-off maneuver, the pilot would return to the same approximate location and fly the ADECS-on maneuver through the same approximate air mass.

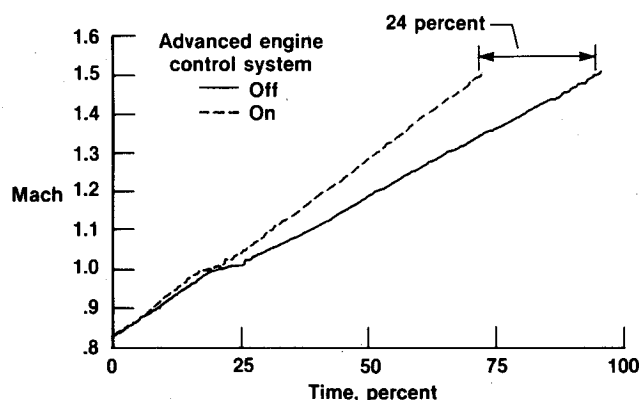


Fig. 10 Maximum power of aircraft acceleration at 50,000 ft.

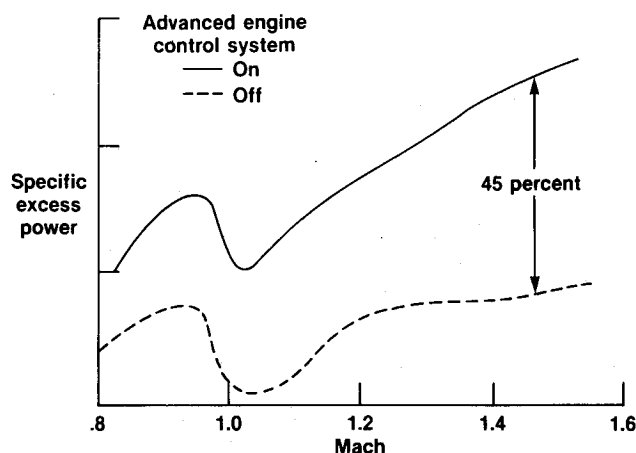


Fig. 11 Specific excess power improvement for maximum power of aircraft acceleration at 50,000 ft.

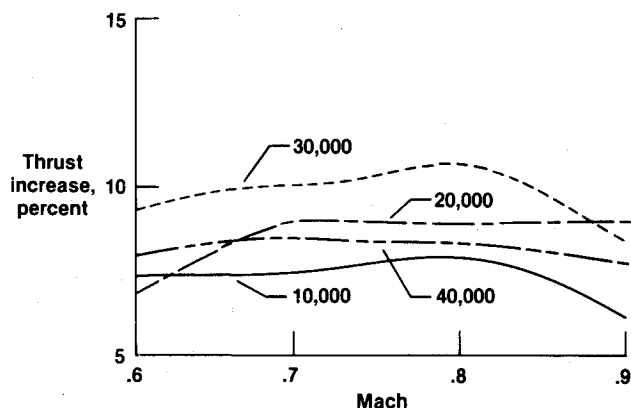


Fig. 8 Percentage improvement in thrust for intermediate power at various altitudes.

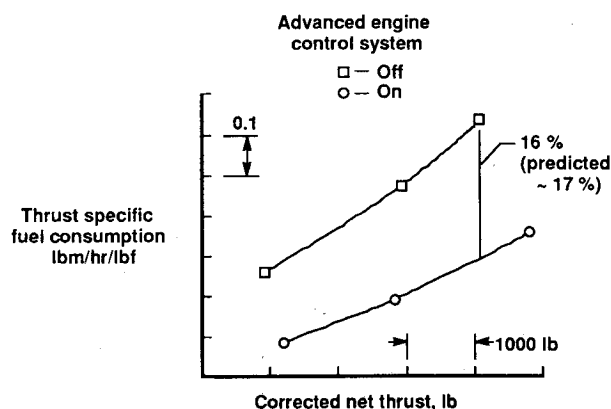


Fig. 9 Percentage reduction in thrust-specific fuel consumption for afterburning power at Mach 0.6 and 30,000 ft.

Advanced Engine Control System Flight Results

Engine Performance Improvements

Figure 8 shows the percent improvement in net propulsive force (FNP) for constant altitude accelerations with intermediate power. The data are corrected to standard day conditions. The maneuvers were flown back-to-back with ADECS off and then repeated with ADECS on to minimize the corrections for ambient temperature and pressure. Constant altitude aircraft accelerations were accomplished at 10,000, 20,000, 30,000, and 40,000 ft. Thrust improvements were calculated from the in-flight thrust deck and ranged from approximately 8% at 10,000 ft to 10.5% at 30,000 ft. These 8–10.5% improvements in thrust were larger than the 5–8% thrust improvements predicted by Myers and Burcham.⁵

Another benefit from trading excess stall margin for increased performance is to reduce the thrust-specific fuel consumption (TSFC) at constant thrust. Figure 9 shows the percent TSFC reduction with ADECS on for a constant thrust. At 30,000 ft, Mach 0.6, and maximum power, a 16% reduction in TSFC was shown. This compares well with the 17% reduction in TSFC predicted by Myers and Burcham.⁵ Similar results were obtained at Mach 0.9 and 1.2 at 30,000 ft. At Mach 0.9, an 11% reduction in TSFC was demonstrated as compared to the 9% predicted reduction.⁵

Aircraft Performance Improvements

The additional thrust obtained with EPR uptrim was effective in improving aircraft performance. When angle of attack is low at this condition, the uptrim command is maximized because the inlet distortion is low. The improvement in engine and aircraft performance during a constant altitude acceleration at maximum power at 50,000 ft is shown in Fig. 10. The

time to accelerate from Mach 0.8 to 1.5 is 24% faster with the ADECS on. Figure 11 shows the improvement in specific excess power P_s with ADECS on for this acceleration. The gain in P_s ranged from approximately 10% at Mach 0.8 to 45% at Mach 1.5. The data were corrected for differences in aircraft gross weight during the accelerations.

Figure 12 shows an intermediate power, 40,000 ft, constant altitude acceleration from Mach 0.6 to 0.95. With ADECS on, a 14% improvement in time to accelerate was demonstrated. Specific excess power with ADECS on was improved by 14% at Mach 0.9.

The effect of EPR uptrim on a 350-kt intermediate power climb from 10,000 to 40,000 ft is shown in Fig. 13. The EPR uptrim produced a significantly higher rate of climb at all altitudes, with a 14% improvement at 40,000 ft. With EPR uptrim, the time to climb from 10,000 to 40,000 ft was reduced

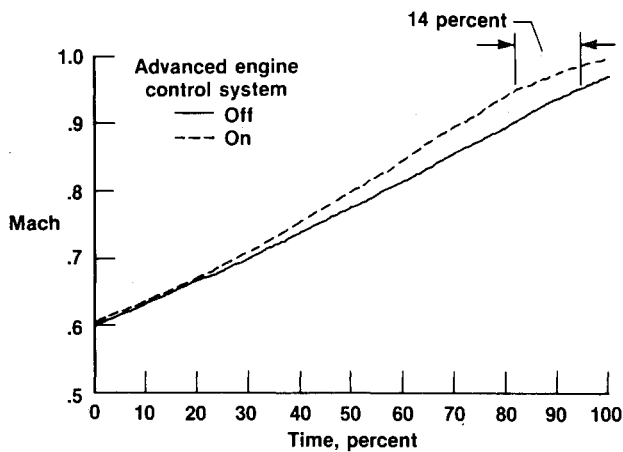


Fig. 12 Intermediate power of aircraft acceleration comparison at 40,000 ft.

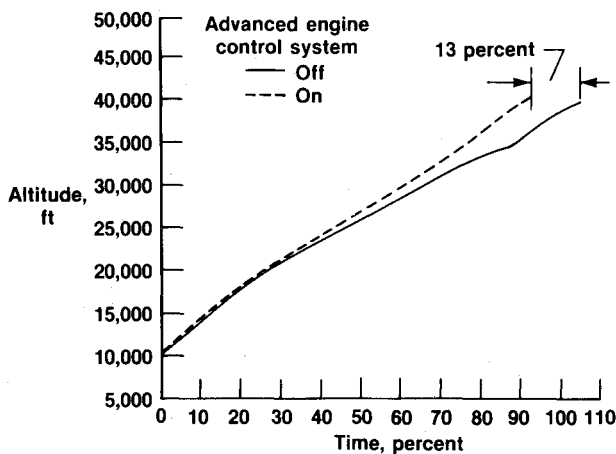


Fig. 13 Intermediate power climb from 10,000 to 40,000 ft at 350 kt.

Table 1 Improvement in F-15 climb performance with ADECS at intermediate power

Altitude, ft	Time-to-climb improvement, %	Rate-of-climb improvement, %, at altitude, ft	Airspeed
10,000-40,000	15	28 at 30,000	250 kt
10,000-40,000	13	14 at 30,000	350 kt
30,000-50,000	30	76 at 50,000	Mach 0.9

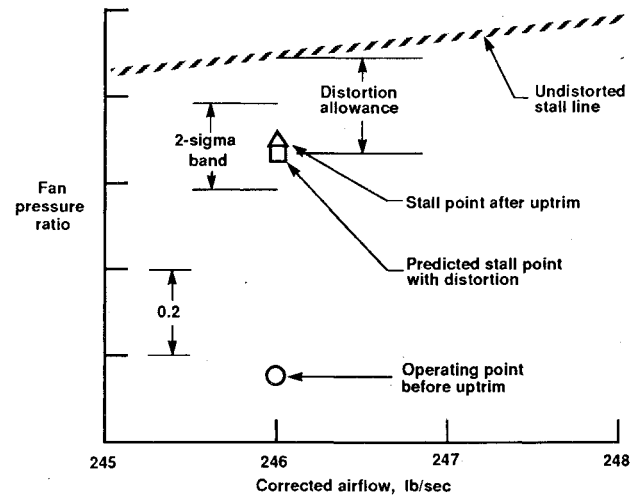


Fig. 14 Stall margin audit of intentional in-flight engine stall at Mach 0.6, 30,000 ft, and maximum power.

13%. The data were corrected for aircraft gross weight differences.

Table 1 summarizes the improvement in F-15 aircraft climb performance with two ADECS engines installed and operating at intermediate power. Table 2 summarizes the improvement in F-15 aircraft acceleration performance with two ADECS engines.

Intentional in-flight engine stalls were generated by increasing the EPR command to high values to permit the methodology used in the stall margin calculation to be validated. A stall margin audit of an engine stall at Mach 0.6 and 30,000 ft is shown in Fig. 14. The figure is an enlarged fan map, representing fan pressure ratio vs corrected air flow. The hashed upper line is the undistorted fan stall line with no inlet pressure distortion. The figure shows the allowance for distortion and also indicates the predicted average engine stall with distortion, based on wind-tunnel data. Also shown for reference are the $\pm 2 = \sigma$ range for engine-to-engine differences and control tolerances. The predicted stall point is less than 1% from the actual engine stall point, which gives credibility to the stall margin audit methodology.

Table 2 Improvement in F-15 aircraft acceleration performance with ADECS

Altitude, ft	Power setting	Mach range	Acceleration time improvement, %	Specific excess power P_s improvement, % @ Mach no.
10,000	Intermediate	0.4-0.9	5	19 @ 0.9
	Maximum	0.4-0.9	7	4 @ 0.9
20,000	Intermediate	0.4-0.9	2	9 @ 0.9
	Maximum	0.4-0.9	8	4 @ 0.9
30,000	Intermediate	0.5-0.9	11	13 @ 0.9
	Maximum	0.5-1.5	24	23 @ 0.9
40,000	Intermediate	0.6-0.9	14	14 @ 0.9
	Maximum	0.6-1.5	13	20 @ 0.9
50,000	Maximum	0.8-1.5	24	45 @ 1.5

Concluding Remarks

The advanced engine control system (ADECS) is the first integrated flight and propulsion control system to be demonstrated in flight on an aircraft specifically configured for integrated controls research. Engine thrust was increased as much as 11% at subsonic flight conditions by uptrimming engine pressure ratio (EPR). The additional thrust significantly improved aircraft performance. Rate of climb was increased 14% at 40,000 ft, and the time to climb from 10,000 to 40,000 ft was reduced 13%. A 14% percent increase at 40,000 ft and 24% increase at 50,000 ft in constant altitude acceleration was obtained at intermediate and maximum power, respectively.

Thirty flight tests have been flown. The ADECS uptrim logic was demonstrated successfully in flight tests over the F-15 flight envelope. The ADECS logic successfully accommodated extreme airplane maneuvers and rapid throttle transients. Intentional stalls were generated by increasing the cockpit adjustable multiplier (KEPR) to high values (approximately two times nominal) to permit the methodology used in the stall margin calculations to be validated. Substantial thrust increases and fuel flow reductions were obtained, as well as significant improvements in aircraft performance during aircraft accelerations and climbs.

By using the high throughput and large memory of current onboard computers, along with high-speed communication data buses, it will be possible to implement a wide range of in-

tegrated flight and propulsion control modes onboard future aircraft. Such modes will increase total vehicle effectiveness without significant weight or cost penalties.

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