Chief Of UAE Armed Forces Views Final Assembly Of First Lockheed Martin Block 60 F-16

Lt. Gen. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, Chief of Staff of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces, and his delegation visited Lockheed Martin's Fort Worth plant on May 23 to review the status of the UAE F-16 program.

The visit included a program status briefing, a tour of the Block 60 program area and a demonstration in the Block 60 F-16 flight simulator. During a tour of the factory, the delegation observed that the forward, center and aft fuselage sections of the first UAE F-16 are in final assembly. The delegation also was able to meet with Lockheed Martin executives and with UAE pilots and project team members residing in the United States.

"I was very impressed with the design tools and modern aircraft factory that are being used to develop and produce the UAE F-16," said Sheikh Mohammed. "I am pleased with the progress of the Block 60 program, which is tracking to schedule. This is a very important program for our national defense, and we eagerly await receiving our first aircraft next year."

The delegation also included Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan, the UAE Minister of Information and Culture, and Maj. Gen. Khalid bin Abdullah al Buainain, Commander of the UAE Air Force and Air Defence.

"We highly value the strong relationships with the United Arab Emirates," said Dain M. Hancock, president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. "Sheikh Mohammed has been a strong supporter of this program, and his personal involvement since the beginning has set the tone for success."

Hancock explained why the UAE program is important to the company: "The 80 aircraft in this program extended our F-16 production and provided a solid continuing production base. This program also involved major development of new capabilities that allowed the F-16 to remain technologically superior to the international competitors. Finally, some of these technologies will be shared among other F-16 programs and next-generation fighters."

The UAE selected the F-16 in an intense competition in 1998, and in June 2000, the program was officially launched. The UAE has ordered 80 Block 60 F- 16s, which will be delivered during 2004-2006. The first aircraft will roll out later this year and begin extensive flight testing. Engine flight testing already has begun.

The Block 60 configuration is the most extensive change in the history of the F-16 program. The unique features of the Block 60 version include the APG-80 multimode radar with active electronically scanned antenna, internalized forward-looking infrared navigation and targeting system, advanced cockpit (three large multifunction displays, picture-in-picture, enhanced automation), fiber-optic avionics data bus, commercial off-the-shelf processors, Falcon Edge internal electronic countermeasures system and the 32,000-pound-thrust-class F110-GE-132 engine. Like other advanced F-16s, the Block 60 can carry conformal fuel tanks, and the two-seat version will feature a dorsal avionics compartment and a fully mechanized rear cockpit.

The F-16 is the choice of 24 countries. More than 4,000 aircraft have been delivered. Major upgrades for all F-16 versions are being incorporated to keep the fleet modern and fully supportable over the aircraft's long service life.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, T-50, C-5, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. Employing about 125,000 people worldwide, Lockheed Martin had 2002 sales of $26.6 billion.

Note to Trade Media: A photo will be available on Tuesday, May 27.

F-16 is a registered trademark of Lockheed Martin Corp.

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