United Arab Emirates Celebrates Arrival Of First Lockheed Martin F-16E/Fs

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrated arrival of its first Lockheed MartinF-16E/F aircraft on May 3. The first "Desert Falcon" F-16s to be based in the UAE were received by the Crown Prince, His Highness General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

The first 10 aircraft were flown by UAE Air Force pilots who recently completed F-16 training in the United States.

"This is a proud and significant day for the United Arab Emirates Air Force and Air Defense Force and our nation," said Major General Khalid bin Abdullah Al Buainain, Commander of the UAE Air Force and Air Defence. "These aircraft have the latest capabilities and will help ensure the security of our nation for many years to come. Arrival of the F-16E/Fs is a giant step in the Air Force modernization process that our country's leaders began planning more than a decade ago."

The F-16E/F aircraft version, also known as Block 60, is the latest and most advanced of the long lineage of F-16s produced by Lockheed Martin. The UAE has ordered a total of 80 aircraft.

"The UAE Air Force defined specific requirements and worked side-by-side with Lockheed Martin engineers in creating a new F-16 version that is unmatched in a broad range of capabilities, from its power-plant to its self-defense electronics," said Ralph D. Heath, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin's Aeronautics business area. "We have been impressed by the expertise of the UAE Air Force representatives and are proud of our joint accomplishment in fielding this outstanding new fighter. The beginning of operations with the Desert Falcon opens a new chapter in the F-16's long history of successful technology evolution and innovation."

The first flight of the F-16E/F was made in December 2003. Flight testing by Lockheed Martin began in early 2004 and is continuing with three F-16F models. UAE pilot training on the F-16E/F began at Tucson Air National Guard Base, Ariz., in September 2004, and the first group of pilots completed their training in April 2005. Popular Science named the F-16E/F Block 60 one of the top 100 technical innovations in 2004.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, research and 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, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2. The company produces major components for the F-2 fighter, and is a co-developer of the C-27J tactical transport and T-50 advanced jet trainer.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

For additional information, visit our Web site:
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