Lockheed Martin Rolls Out Poland F-16, NATO's Most Advanced Fighter

Ceremonies were held today at Lockheed Martinin Fort Worth, Texas, to commemorate the Polish F-16 Peace Sky program. The ceremony marks an important production milestone, demonstrating that the program is on schedule and on budget. When delivered, the Polish F-16 will be the most advanced fighter aircraft in NATO.

Dignitaries attending the commemorative ceremony included Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland; Anna Fotyga, minister of foreign affairs; Radoslaw Sikorski, minister of national defense; Lt. Gen. Stanislaw Targosz, commander of the Poland Air Force; and other senior Polish officials. Representing the U.S. Government were U.S. ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe; Gen. T. Michael Moseley, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force; and Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Air Force for International Affairs. Hosting the ceremony were Ralph D. Heath, executive vice president of Lockheed Martin and president of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, and June R. Shrewsbury, vice president of F-16 Programs.

"Poland is delighted to be taking delivery of an aircraft that will not only transform our capabilities in the air but also those of our ground troops and the Navy," said Minister of Defense Sikorski. "It will also significantly bolster the operational capacity of our expeditionary forces."

The Poland Peace Sky Program began in April 2003. Today's rollout commemorates the 48 F-16s that Lockheed Martin is producing for Poland. The aircraft joins a fleet of more than 4,300 F-16s operated by 24 air forces around the world.

"This is a great day for Poland and the United States," said Deputy Undersecretary Lemkin. "The Polish Air Force now will be flying a frontline, top-performance fighter, virtually the same F-16 being flown by the U.S. Air Force. The Peace Sky program is the centerpiece of an enduring relationship between our air forces and will allow us to train together, operate together, fly together and learn from one another. These F-16s will provide the foundation of interoperability that will enable us to carry out operations as NATO and coalition partners."

Commander of the Poland Air Force Targosz expressed pride that Poland has acquired such advanced F-16s. "The Poland Air Force is proud to accept our new F-16 today," he said. "Poland now has the most technologically advanced F-16s in NATO, strengthening not only the Poland Air Force, but improving our interoperability with other F-16 operators in the NATO alliance."

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics President Ralph D. Heath recognized the vision shared by the United States and Poland when the Peace Sky program began. "We have a new NATO beginning today," he said. "Peace Sky is physical evidence of the vision both our nations shared to take Poland and NATO to a new level with this most capable, combat-proven, 21st century fighter."

The F-16 for Poland includes enhanced capabilities, modern technologies and growth potential that will establish a foundation for the Poland Air Force in the 21st century. "We have been on or ahead of schedule in all key events," said Lockheed Martin's Shrewsbury. "We will take every measure to ensure the Poland Air Force achieves and maintains its highest levels of capability and readiness while flying the F-16."

The Poland Peace Sky program includes 36 F-16Cs and 12 F-16Ds, all powered by the Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-229 engine. This first aircraft - a single-seat F-16C model - was accepted by the U.S. government (as agent for Poland in the Foreign Military Sales process) on March 30, one month ahead of schedule. The U.S. government accepted the first two-seat F-16D version in June. The first four aircraft will be ferried to Poland in November with the remainder following in 2007 and 2008.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The F-16 is the choice of 24 nations. More than 4,300 aircraft have been delivered worldwide from assembly lines in five countries. The F-16 program has been characterized by unprecedented international cooperation among governments, air forces and aerospace industries. Major upgrades to all F-16 versions are being incorporated to keep the fleet modern and fully supportable over the aircraft's long service life.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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