Lockheed Martin, Poland Air Force Celebrate Arrival Of Most Advanced F-16 Multirole Fighters In Europe

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Lockheed Martin , the Poland Air Force (PoAF), Polish Ministry of Defense (PMOD) and other Polish government officials celebrated the arrival of the first four new Advanced Block 52 F-16 multirole fighters at the Posnan-Krzesiny Airbase in Poland today. The aircraft are part of the Poland Peace Sky Foreign Military Sales program and are the most technologically advanced F-16s in Europe today.

Polish dignitaries attending the ceremony included Lech Kaczynski, president of the Republic of Poland; Radoslaw Sikorski, minister of national defense; Lt. Gen. Stanislaw Targosz, commander of the Poland Air Force; Gen. Franciszek Gagor, The Adjutant General; and other senior Polish officials. Representing the U.S. Government were Victor Ashe, U.S. ambassador to Poland and Gen. Tom Hobbins, U.S. Air Force Europe Commander. Attending the ceremonies on behalf of Lockheed Martin were June Shrewsbury, vice-president of F-16 programs; Scott Harris, president for Continental Europe; Irma Sippel, director of the Poland F-16 program, along with the senior management team for Poland Peace Sky.

The Poland Peace Sky Program began in April 2003. Today's in-country arrival ceremony 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.

"The state-of-the-art capabilities of the Poland F-16 contribute significantly to the modernization of our armed forces and will play a major role in the protection of our nation and our allies," said Minister of National Defense Radoslaw Sikorski.

Lt. Gen. Targosz, commander of the Poland Air Force stated, "Acquiring the most technologically advanced F-16s in European NATO will allow us to train together, operate together, fly together and learn from one another. These F- 16s enable us to carry out operations as NATO and allow the Poland Air Force to become a strong coalition partner."

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 F-16 Vice President June Shrewsbury. "We will take every measure to ensure the Poland Air Force achieves and maintains the highest levels of capability and readiness while flying the F-16."

The ceremony today also marked the naming of the Polish F-16s, a long- standing Polish tradition. Mrs. Kaczynska, wife of President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczynski christened the new aircraft "Jastrzab" ("Hawk").

The Poland Peace Sky program includes 36 F-16Cs and 12 F-16Ds, all powered by the Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-229 engine. The first four aircraft to arrive are three single-seat F-16C models and one two-seat F-16D model. The next four Polish F-16s are scheduled to arrive in December with the remainder of the PoAF fleet scheduled for delivery 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 140,000 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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