Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon Sets World Standard For International Partnerships, Performance And Best Value

Lockheed Martin's F-16 Fighting Falcon continues on the leading edge of technology as the world standard in multi-role fighters. With evolutionary technology upgrades and selection by 24 nations, the F-16 is the most proven, capable and affordable multi-role fighter available on the international market today.

International government and industry partnerships have played a huge role in the continuous technological evolution and growth of the F-16.

"The F-16 continues to provide a worldwide partner base of 24 nations with advanced technology upgrade options, best capabilities and best value," said John Larson, vice president for F-16, T-50 and F-2 programs. "These 24 nations depend on the F-16 to help meet their defining moments with unparalleled capabilities. Our partnership with the U.S. Air Force provides continued training and upgrades for this large fleet of F-16 users and we are proud of the international partnerships that Lockheed Martin has fostered with each of these nations."

Lockheed Martin pilots are putting a current-generation version of the F-16 through its high performance paces in daily flight demonstrations this week at Le Bourget air field.

Underscoring Lockheed Martin's "Worldwide Partnerships" theme for this year's Paris show, Larson said the F-16 continues to dominate the international fighter market with 51 repeat buys by 14 customers. "The F-16 is the most affordable and proven choice, assisting countries in protecting their security," said Larson. "Continuous technology enhancements and a very clear insertion path through upgrades and global sustainment allow the F-16 to perform as a comprehensive weapon system with over 12 million flight hours, proving its safety and reliability."

Larson explained that many of the F-16's advanced technologies were spawned from the aircraft's performance in combat operations by multiple nations. "We took feedback from the war fighter and incorporated it into the avionics systems and architecture of the F-16, allowing this continuous integration of technology to keep the aircraft relevant and meet the needs of our customers."

The F-16 continues as a modern, highly capable, affordable and supportable fighter. The program is healthy and full of activity, with firm production through 2012, and a strong likelihood of new orders that will extend the line for several more years. Larson said there are current backorders for about 106 F-16 aircraft and significant international potential remains.

Recent F-16 program milestones have included an arrival ceremony for the first aircraft in Poland, a major capabilities upgrade program for Turkey's existing fleet of F-16s, and Turkey's recent announcement of a follow-on buy for 30 new advanced F-16 Block 50 aircraft.

Turkey's upgrade program is exemplary of several F-16 modification programs available to provide the newest air combat capabilities to fleet aircraft. The upgrade potential for the F-16 fleet is substantial, since 24 countries have ordered F-16s to date and the aircraft will be in operation around the world for several more decades.

"Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Air Force are committed to modification and sustainment of the worldwide F-16 fleet. We recognize that we have a serious obligation to support our customers in their missions, and we also recognize fleet sustainment as a growing customer need, as well as a business opportunity," Larson said.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin Corp. employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

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