Current Lockheed Martin F-16 Versions Are Most Advanced Multi-Role Fighters Available Today

The two versions of the F-16 being delivered to customers today are the most advanced multi-role fighter aircraft types currently available on the international market and are building on the F-16's reputation for effectiveness and value, the Lockheed Martin vice president for the program said today.

"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," said John Larson, vice president for F-16 programs, in remarks to reporters at the Farnborough Air Show.

Larson said there are current backorders for about 98 F-16 aircraft, plus a strong possibility Lockheed Martin will gain 200-400 further orders during the next few years.

Recent F-16 program milestones have included the 4,400th F-16 delivered for Poland and a recent contract for 24 new Advanced Block 52 F-16s for Morocco, the newest member of the F-16 family.

In addition to the F-16 production programs, Lockheed Martin continues to develop and integrate advanced technologies to upgrade programs for existing F-16 aircraft to ensure interoperability with the world's only 5th Generation Fighters, the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II.

"This integration of advanced technologies for fielded and new aircraft provides an opportunity for F-16 operators to benefit from the latest developments in technology and capabilities for fighter aircraft," Larson said. "This technology will provide a natural bridge from 4th Generation of fighters to the 5th Generation."

Aircraft now being produced for Poland, Israel, Greece and Pakistan are in the Advanced Block 50/52 F-16C/D configuration. The United Arab Emirates was the launch customer for the Block 60 F-16 version, which has the type designation - F-16E/F - and is the most sophisticated configuration of the F-16 produced to date.

Larson said both new versions have the latest technologies and capabilities -- including AESA radar and around-the-clock, all-weather, standoff, autonomous, air intercept and precision strike. These aircraft have the latest in avionics, sensors and weapons, plus user-friendly cockpits and integrated systems that provide pilots with high situation awareness.

Both types have features that extend mission range, persistence and payload -- including internal electronic countermeasures equipment and optional conformal fuel tanks. The aft cockpit of the two-place versions of both types serves either as a weapon system operator station or an instructor pilot station.

"Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Air Force are totally 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 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 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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