

Lockheed Martin Unveils First New F-16 For Pakistan In Ceremony Attended By Air Force Chiefs

Lockheed Martin unveiled the first of 18 new F-16s being produced for Pakistan in ceremonies today at its Fort Worth, Texas, facility. Officials including the Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. and Pakistan Air Forces were on hand to witness the event.

Air Chief Marshal Rao Quamar Suleman, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), accepted the first F-16 Block 52 aircraft on behalf of his nation. Also present were Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, and other senior officials.

The U.S. government was represented by Rep. Kay Granger, Texas 12th District, and Gen. Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

"Peace Drive is the flagship of modernization for Pakistan's Air Force. It is the latest configuration of the best 4th generation multirole fighter available in the world today," said John Larson, vice president of F-16 programs for Lockheed Martin.

The aircraft order is designated as "Peace Drive I," continuing a long tradition of naming F-16 international sales programs with the word Peace. The program raises the total number of F-16s ordered by Pakistan to 54. The Pakistan Air Force received its first F-16, in the Block 15 F-16A/B configuration, in 1982. Pakistan has been operating Lockheed Martin aircraft since 1963, when it received C-130B airlifters.

The Peace Drive I order is for 12 F-16Cs and six F-16Ds, all powered by the Pratt & Whitney F100-PW-229 engine. The first aircraft - a two-seat F-16D model - will be delivered to the U.S. government (as agent for Pakistan in the Foreign Military Sales process) in December, with the remainder following in 2010.

The F-16 is the choice of 25 nations. More than 4,400 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 is a global security company that 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 2008 sales of \$42.7 billion.

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First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact: karen.l.hagar@lmco.com

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