Romania Becomes The 20th Member Of The F-35 Global Alliance

F-35 reinforced as one-of-a-kind aircraft for allied air defense

FORT WORTH, Texas, Nov. 21, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- The Government of Romania confirmed today its intent to procure 32 Lockheed Martin 5th Generation F-35 Lightning II aircraft by signing a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) through a U.S. government Foreign Military Sale. This decision marks a significant milestone in Romania's defense strategy and its commitment to maintaining a robust and advanced military force.

"We are pleased to welcome Romania into the F-35 enterprise," said Lt. Gen Mike Schmidt, director and program executive officer of the F-35 Joint Program Office. "The integration of the F-35 Lightning II aircraft into the Romanian Air Force will significantly strengthen NATO's deterrence capabilities by providing unmatched strategic, operational, and tactical advantages. The F-35 Joint Program Office is dedicated to continuing a strong relationship with Romania, ensuring a successful transition and providing comprehensive support for their pilots and maintainers as we move forward together on this great effort."

The F-35 plays a crucial role in 21st Century Security® by deterring threats and disrupting adversaries' plans. By its very presence, the F-35 enhances the safety of nations operating it and protects freedom around the world.

"For nearly 30 years, Romania and Lockheed Martin have been defense and security partners," said Bridget Lauderdale, vice president and general manager, F-35 Lightning II Program, Lockheed Martin. "The acquisition of the F-35 further fortifies Romania's national security and deterrent capability."

"The F-35's growing presence across Europe demonstrates alliance-based deterrence and is setting the foundation for NATO and allied nations' next generation air power capability," said Mara Motherway, vice president, Strategy and Business Development, Lockheed Martin.

The F-35 offers the most cost-effective solution for Romania, combining unprecedented operational capability with an affordable and efficient global sustainment network. This partnership promises technological advancements, reinforcing Romania's position in the global defense landscape. It also represents a significant leap in defense technology and international collaboration.

The Romania Air Force's F-35s will integrate seamlessly with existing F-16 fleets, enhancing the unique, powerful capabilities of each aircraft and establishing a fortified defense profile. Last year, Lockheed Martin and the governments of Romania and the Netherlands established the European F-16 Training Center (EFTC) in Romania. The partnerships in place at the EFTC deliver tailored training at an accelerated pace, ensuring Romanian pilots are fully prepared to execute their missions safely and effectively.

The F-35 is the most advanced, connected fighter aircraft in the world, providing unmatched 5th Generation capabilities and strengthening allied deterrence for the U.S. and its allies. To date, 20 global customers have chosen the F-35 for its advanced, connected capabilities to strengthen 21st Century Security®, enhance global partnerships and power economic growth. More than 1,000 F-35s are currently operational around the globe, generating more than 940,000 flight hours. F-35s operate from 33 bases worldwide, including 10 nations operating on home soil. As adversaries advance and legacy aircraft age, the F-35 is critical to maintaining air dominance for decades to come.

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