

Lockheed Martin And Slovakia Usher In New Era Of European Air Defense With Arrival Of First F-16 Block 70 Jets

MALACKY AIR BASE, Slovakia, July 22, 2024 – Lockheed Martin and the Slovak Republic today announced the arrival of the first F-16 Block 70s in Slovakia, marking a new era in European air defense. F-16 Block 70 fighter jets will enable the Slovak Republic to ensure the protection of its airspace and strengthen European security cooperation across allies.

Lockheed Martin has produced five F-16 Block 70 jets for Slovakia to-date, with the remaining nine jets for Slovakia all in production. All 14 of Slovakia's F-16s will be delivered by the end of 2025.

OJ Sanchez, vice president and general manager of the Integrated Fighter Group at Lockheed Martin, emphasized the milestone's strategic importance: "Slovakia is at the forefront of adopting Europe's most advanced 4th Generation fighter, the F-16 Block 70. These jets not only represent a stronger alliance between Slovakia, the United States, and NATO allies, but also equip the Slovak Air Force with advanced capabilities to face 21st Century Security® challenges."

Sanchez added: "As Slovakia has now joined the ranks of nations operating the F-16, a benchmark NATO fighter, they bolster their defense capabilities and readiness for NATO operations."

The F-16 Block 70 jets are equipped with the Northrop Grumman APG-83 AESA Radar, advanced avionics, an extended structural service life of 12,000 hours, and critical safety features like the Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance System (Auto GCAS). Since its integration into the U.S. Air Force in late 2014, the Auto GCAS has been instrumental in saving 13 pilots across 12 F-16 incidents, exemplifying the aircraft's unparalleled safety and performance standards.

Lockheed Martin has a backlog of 128 F-16 Block 70/72 jets to be produced in Greenville, South Carolina, with 12 total jets delivered to-date for international partners. Earlier this month, the company delivered the 4600th F-16, a testament to the continued relevance of the aircraft over five decades.

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