Lockheed Martin Completes Production Of Initial F-16 Block 70 Fleets For Bulgaria And Slovakia

F-16 platform strengthens national defense, deepens NATO and allied air integration

GREENVILLE, S.C., Dec. 15, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) has completed production of all F-16 Block 70 aircraft for Bulgaria and Slovakia's initial fleets, equipping both air forces with advanced F-16s ready for NATO and allied operations.

The aircraft were produced at Lockheed Martin's facility in Greenville, South Carolina, and completed DD250 final acceptance through the U.S. government's Foreign Military Sales program.

Why it matters

Full F-16 Block 70 fleets give Bulgaria and Slovakia the capability to provide national air defense and support NATO air policing with a modern, fully interoperable fighter. The aircraft connect directly to NATO systems and support the same mission sets already flown by F-16 operators across Europe.

These aircraft are integral to both nations' defense modernization plans and align their air forces with the training, standards and operational practices used by 29 allied operators. That common framework improves readiness, strengthens the alliance's posture and increases the number of interoperable aircraft available for NATO missions.

Expert perspectives

Mike Shoemaker, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Integrated Fighter Group:

"This milestone represents the talent and dedication of the joint government, military and industry teams. With full F-16 Block 70 fleets now produced, both nations move from planning for next-generation airpower to demonstrating it in daily operations. This progress enhances NATO's collective readiness and provides commanders with reliable, interoperable 21st Century Security capability across the alliance."

Advanced capability, proven platform

The F-16 Block 70 features the APG-83 AESA radar, which shares 95% software commonality and 70% hardware commonality with the F-35 radar. The aircraft also includes conformal fuel tanks, a modern digital cockpit, a 12,000-hour service life and the life-saving Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance System (Auto GCAS).

These systems support the full range of air policing, air defense and joint exercise missions flown by F-16 operators across Europe. With more than 700 F-16s in Europe and a global sustainment network already in place, Bulgaria and Slovakia gain access to established training pipelines, proven logistics support and a broad community of operators that help ensure high availability and efficient long-term maintenance.

Transatlantic industrial partnership

The F-16 program is powered by a global supply chain of more than 530 suppliers across 12 countries, including a strong network of European partners. Companies such as LOTN in Slovakia and Avionams in Bulgaria contribute to this ecosystem and reflect Europe's growing role in the collaborative industrial base that supports NATO readiness.

With final assembly and other component manufacturing taking place at Lockheed Martin's Greenville, S.C. facility – the world's only active F-16 production line – the program supports over 1,500 skilled jobs and preserves strategic fighter production capacity in the United States.

The F-16 program reinforces transatlantic industrial cooperation sustaining advanced U.S. manufacturing capability while generating economic value, supply chain opportunity and long-term industrial participation across Europe. By strengthening industrial base cooperation, the F-16 program promotes resilience, supports shared security goals, and helps allied nations maintain modern, interoperable fighter capabilities.

About Lockheed Martin

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