



Defense Security Cooperation Agency
NEWS RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16, 2009 -- The partnership between the U.S. and the government of Pakistan reached a milestone Oct. 13 when the first F-16 Block 52 aircraft was rolled out during a ceremony in Fort Worth, Texas.

“The roll out marks a very significant accomplishment by the men and women of the U.S. government and their industry partners, who, despite uncertain funding and changing requirements, managed to produce and fly the first aircraft on schedule,” said Army Col. Brandon Denecke, Defense Security Cooperation Agency country program director for Pakistan.”

Military and civilian officials from both governments were on hand for the event and spoke of a strengthened partnership that will endure as a result of the turnover of this first of 18 F-16s.

“Good things are going to result from our two nations with these new F-16s,” said Rep. Kay Granger from Texas’ 12th District during the ceremony. “Our nations continue the flight path of mutual respect, mutual friendship and a continued partnership that will grow and last for decades to come with the binding ties of the fighting falcon.”

“This event affords us the opportunity to continue fostering our vital military to military partnership,” said Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff. “The F-16 Block 52 aircraft offers excellent night, adverse weather and precision weapons capability while increasing interoperability with U.S. and NATO aircraft and the ability to operate in a net centric environment. This aircraft, and certainly those that follow, will bring a robust and versatile defensive capability to the Pakistani military and serve as an enhancement to the nation’s air defense and combat air patrol mission requirements.”

Amb. Hussain Haqqani, Pakistani Ambassador to U.S., was on hand to receive the aircraft and cited the importance of the aircraft to his country. He said, “This first of 18 aircraft that will be delivered to Pakistan will

enhance Pakistan's capabilities against all of its enemies, especially the terrorists who are a common threat to both our democracies." He also said the aircraft was important to the Pakistani people and increased their confidence in the U.S. as an ally.

"The Pakistani and U.S. leadership has worked very hard to develop a strategic partnership between the two countries in order to achieve our common strategic interests," said Air Chief Marshall Rao Qamar, commander of Pakistan's Air Force. "If this relationship is to succeed, it has to be built on a solid foundation of trust between the two allies. This F-16 is not just an aircraft, but a capability for Pakistan. It is a symbol of trust and the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S."