

Multinational Alliance's 1st Boeing C-17 Joins Heavy Airlift Wing in Hungary

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PÁPA AIR BASE, Hungary, July 27, 2009 -- The first Boeing [NYSE: BA] C-17 Globemaster III acquired by the NATO Airlift Management Organization and the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) consortium officially joined the Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW) at Pápa Air Base, Hungary, today, as part of a ceremony commemorating the activation of a new airlift capability for 10 NATO and two Partnership for Peace nations.

The advanced airlifter, known as SAC 01, is the first of three C-17s that will be assigned to the HAW in western Hungary this year and will soon start flying missions in support of the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan.

"I want to extend my thanks to all of the nations that chose to participate in SAC," said Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, NATO deputy secretary general. "Because of your commitment, today we are well-positioned to provide aid anywhere, at any time, and on any mission -- humanitarian, disaster relief, or peacekeeping."

The unique SAC approach to shared use of the strategic airlifter is viewed as a model for the future acquisition and management of defense capabilities. The SAC nations will share acquisition and operating costs for the C-17s over the nearly 30-year course of the agreement. SAC 01 has been contributed by the United States, a member of the consortium. Hungary agreed to both host the wing at Pápa Air Base and to register the C-17s under the Hungarian flag.

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Richard Johnston, chairman of the SAC Steering Board, praised the nations for setting a new standard of multinational cooperation.

"Visions are only realized when unrelenting dedication to achievement is applied in full measure," Johnston said. "When applied twelvefold, success becomes destiny. Today, 12 nations witness the activation of their Heavy Airlift Wing."

The HAW's first wing commander, U.S. Air Force Col. John Zazworsky, thanked the hundreds of multinational military personnel who prepared the former Warsaw Pact fighter base for its first mission.

"For nearly a year now, personnel from 12 nations have worked as a team here in Pápa, blending their varied skills, military experiences and cultures into a new form of multinational military unit," said Zazworsky. "The team has consistently focused on being able to conduct strategic airlift missions as soon as the first aircraft is delivered. Now that we have reached that milestone, we have the strong sense that we are creating a model for future cooperative military efforts."

"Boeing is proud that the C-17 is a part of this historic day," said Jean Chamberlin, Boeing vice president, Global Mobility Systems. "It's the only aircraft capable of performing all of SAC's airlift missions -- strategic and tactical, military and humanitarian, brigade airdrop and aeromedical evacuation -- and it can do all of that using standard runways or short, austere airfields."

The SAC group includes 10 NATO nations -- Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, United States -- and Partnership for Peace members Sweden and Finland.

Boeing will deliver SAC's two remaining C-17s in September and October. A Boeing team assigned to Pápa Air Base will provide material management, depot maintenance and other support for the C-17s under Global Services & Support's C-17 Globemaster III Sustainment Partnership program.

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