Air China Orders Five Boeing 777s

Air China, the flag carrier of the People's Republic of China, has ordered five 777-200s, valued at approximately US$685 million, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group today confirmed Premier Li Peng and Vice President Al Gore participated in a signing ceremony for the order with representatives from the Civil Aviation Administration of China, Air China and Boeing at the Great Hall of the People today in Beijing. Air China will take delivery of its first three 777-200s in the fourth quarter of 1998. The remaining two are scheduled for delivery in 1999. The airline has not yet announced an engine selection.

Air China's 777-200s will have a two-class configuration seating 345 passengers with 49 in business class and 296 in economy. With a range of 3,585 to 4,830 nautical miles (6,639 to 8,945 kilometers), Air China plans to use the 777s for service to Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and other southeast Asia destinations as well as high-density domestic routes. The airline currently operates 45 Boeing airplanes including 19 737s, 16 747s and 10 767s.

Boeing forecasts a total market for approximately 1900 commercial jet airplane sales in China (including Hong Kong) worth US$124 billion over the next 20 years, making China the largest international commercial airplane market. Airlines from China so far this year have placed orders for Boeing airplanes valued at US$1.13 billion.

With 323 orders, the Boeing 777 family of airplanes has captured more than 75 percent of its market since being launched in October 1990. The 777 fleet now consists of 50 airplanes in operation by nine customers worldwide. Air China is the 25th customer - and the second in China after China Southern Airlines - to order the popular 777.

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