Turkish Prime Minister Confirms 49-Plane Order

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz and U.S. Vice President Al Gore today attended a signing ceremony confirming an order by Turkish Airlines (THY) for 49 Boeing 737-800s. The purchase agreement was confirmed during a signing by Turkish Airlines Chairman Dr. Cem Kozlu and Ron Woodard, president, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

In October, THY -- the flag carrier for Turkey -- announced its selection of Next-Generation Boeing 737-800s. The package includes 26 firm orders and 23 options.

"The agreement represents a significant milestone for The Boeing Company," Woodard said. "It will support Boeing commercial airplane production in the United States, and it strengthens our relationship with a valued, long-time customer."

The airline selected the 737-800 to provide service for its expanding route network. Total value of the package, if all options are exercised, is approximately $2.5 billion.

The Next-Generation 737-800 models are powered by new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the U.S. and Snecma of France. The CFM56-7 has a 10-percent higher thrust capability than the CFM56-3C engines powering today's 737s.

"THY's success over the past 63 years is due to its commitment to excellence and its ability to take advantage of opportunities," said Seddik Belyamani, vice-president, International Sales -- South Asia/Pacific, Africa, Middle East. "THY already has 30 737s, and its experience with the twinjet's superior operating and performance characteristics led to this decision to select the 737-800 for fleet expansion. THY's decision reflects their confidence in our products and our company. We couldn't be more pleased," he added.

The Next-Generation 737 family -- the 737-600/-700/-800/-900 -- has been the fastest-selling jetliner model in history. Since the program's launch in November 1993, customers have placed orders for 737 Next-Generation 737s.

The 737-800 was launched on Sept. 5, 1994, at the Farnborough Air Show, with first deliveries beginning in early 1998.

Changes from the 737-300/-400/-500 models include a new larger wing, higher cruise speed, more range, and new engines with improvements in noise, fuel burn and thrust. The 737-800 is a stretched version of the current 737-400 and is capable of carrying 160 to 189 passengers.

With a length of 129 feet, 6 inches, the Boeing Next-Generation 737-800 is the longest 737 ever built.

The 737 -- a short-to-medium-range airplane -- delivers more value to airlines in the form of reliability, simplicity, and reduced operating and maintenance costs. In addition, the new 737-600/-700/-800 models will enjoy crew commonality with today's 737.

In 1933, Turkish Airlines inaugurated service with three weekly flights between Ankara and Istanbul, a distance of 220 miles. Over the years THY has expanded its reach into Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and the Far East, excelling in being an aviation leader. The airline flies to 26 domestic and 59 international destinations.

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