Boeing KC-46A Tanker for Japan Completes First Refueling Flight

First KC-46A for a non-US customer gives and receives fuel with another KC-46A

Boeing will deliver tanker to Japan Air Self-Defense Force this year

EVERETT, Wash., Aug. 16, 2021 – The first Boeing [NYSE: BA] KC-46A tanker built for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) recently refueled another KC-46A aircraft in the skies over Washington state. The Japan-bound tanker also successfully received fuel in return.

“Refueling with the first Japan KC-46A is an important milestone for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force,” said Jamie Burgess, KC-46 program manager. “KC-46A is the world’s most advanced air refueling aircraft and has already transferred more than 42 million gallons of fuel to other aircraft globally through its boom and drogue systems.”

Japan is the KC-46 program’s first non-U.S. customer and is scheduled to receive its first aircraft this year.

“State-of-the-art refueling makes the KC-46A a standout, but this tanker goes well beyond that,” said Will Shaffer, president of Boeing Japan. “The ability to carry cargo and passengers while maintaining tactical situational awareness makes the aircraft a critical tool in the security alliance between the U.S. and Japan.”

The Japan KC-46A is capable of refueling U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and JASDF aircraft.

The U.S. Air Force awarded Boeing a contract for the JASDF’s first KC-46A tanker in December 2017. The agreement was completed through the Foreign Military Sale process between the U.S. government and Japan. A second Japan tanker is already in production.

Boeing is assembling the KC-46A aircraft for both the U.S. Air Force and Japan on its 767 production line in Everett, Washington. Boeing’s Japanese partners produce 16% of the KC-46A airframe structure.

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