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## National pride on display

# STAR TURN FOR THE PRESIDENT



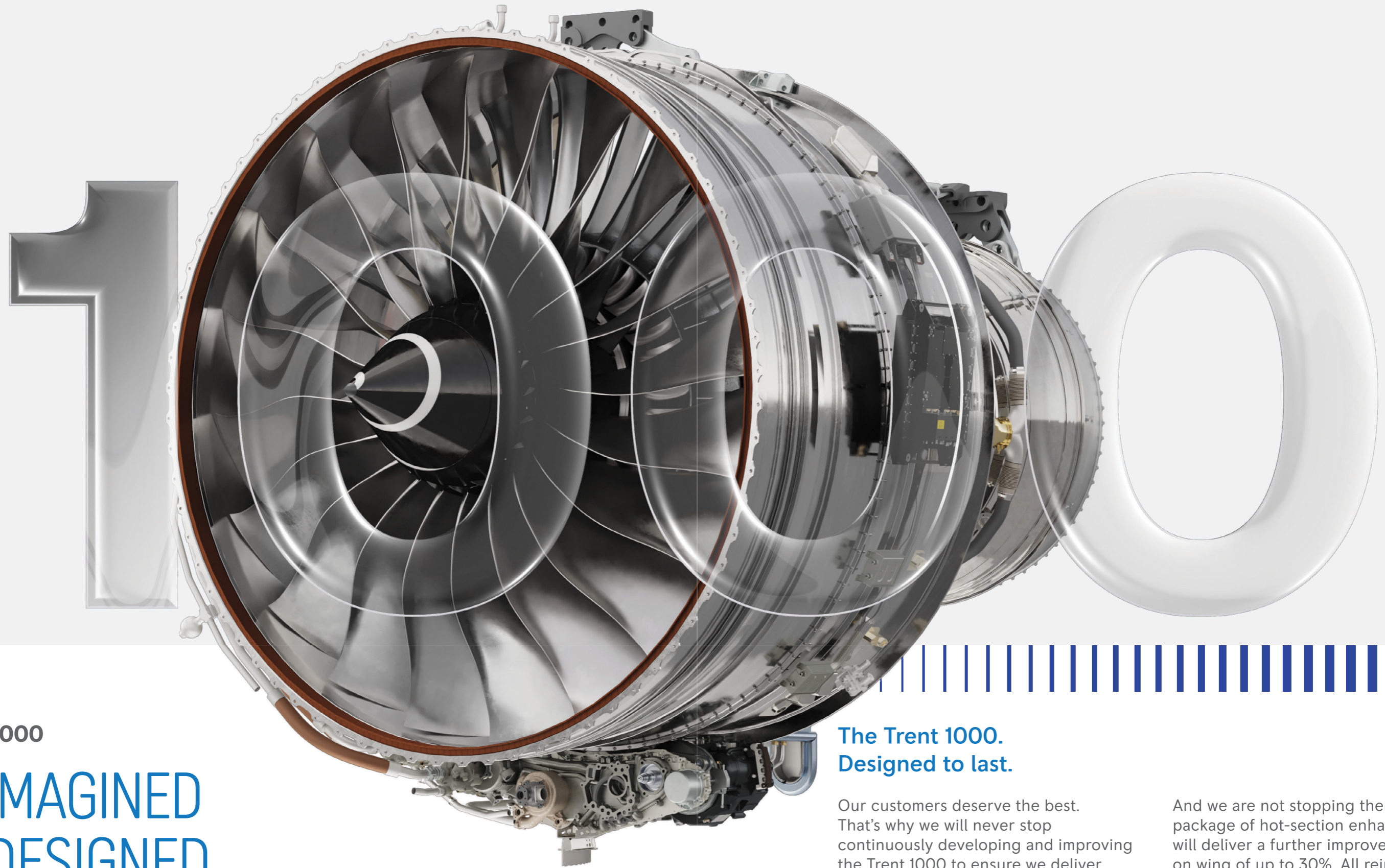
**P**resident of Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, watched with pride as his country's flying display team, the Silver Stars, performed an amazing aerial demonstration as the guest of honour formally opened the inaugural Egypt International Airshow yesterday.

Once the President left the showground for his nearby summer retreat, the event was open for business with visitors from across the region streaming in to see new technologies and ideas and to develop new relationships.

▶ BACKGROUND TO THE SILVER STARS – SEE P13



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### AOI and Honeywell make up

The Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI) signed a memorandum of understanding with Honeywell yesterday to recommence overhaul of the civilian TFE731 jet engine. The Egyptian Air Force's K-8E Karakoram fleet has suffered because of the souring of relations between the two companies. A new contract should come into effect by the beginning of 2025, a source said.

► Pictured right, representatives of Honeywell and AOI stand together at the AOI stand after signing a new deal that will see the Egyptian company overhaul the TFE731 powerplant again.



### Integrated air defence is on Thales' radar

The war in Ukraine, with its new emphasis on the large-scale use of small drones, has seen an increase in interest in Thales' air defence systems, the company said at the show.

The European defence giant is promoting its integrated air defence systems, which it says can handle simultaneous attacks from ballistic missiles to strike aircraft, helicopters and low, slow-flying uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The use of swarms of UAVs in Ukraine has focused the minds of many nations on the problems of

defending their airspace against multiple types of attackers, which are often timed to arrive over their targets at the same time, greatly complicating the task of defenders.

Thales is here promoting its Ground Master 200 and 400 radars. The 400 is an air surveillance radar with a range of more than 500km, while the 200 has a detection range of around 250km. However, the latter radar, with a refresh rate of 40 times a minute and the ability to detect UAVs with small radar cross-sections and slow groundspeeds – below the limit for

some larger radars – makes it ideal for handling this new threat.

Since the Ground Master range entered service around a decade ago, more than 260 have been sold, said Thales business development manager for land-air systems, Alain Charton.

The radars have two significant qualities, said Charton; they feed into a command and control system to provide an integrated picture of the surrounding airspace and they are 'system-agnostic', able to work with a wide range of effectors – missiles or guns – from a variety of suppliers.

"Everybody is connected: everybody knows what the other guys are doing and who is engaging who, to avoid the danger of fratricide," Charton said. Thales, as a specialist integrator, has an advantage over some competitors that produce only individual systems, he said.

Charton declines to say whether the system has been procured by countries in the Middle East region, but confirms that there is a new interest in air defence systems: "A few years ago, it was OK; everybody was friends. Now, they are looking for a solution to protect their airspace."



Alain Charton, business development manager at Thales Land-Air Systems

### Estonia's electric dreams

Estonia's ElectroAir is powering a green technological future, according to Issa Moussallem, the MENA region sales manager.

The manufacturer is at the show to offer a range of charging solutions tailored to the 'unique' needs of electric mobility from 22kW AC fast-charging to 600 kW High Power Charging DC models.

"Leveraging our extensive expertise in manufacturing ground service equipment for aviation, we over see every step of the production process, from planning and design to commissioning and client support," he said.

One of the products being displayed at the show includes its ECharger DC (pictured) which can be used for all electrically ground handling equipment.

"We currently use this product at airports in Estonia and are keen for them to be seen here in Egypt, as well as all over the world."

The company already sells its products to the military globally, including Egypt.



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## US welcomes Egypt opportunity

The United States Air Force (USAF) is supporting the inaugural show backed by the presence of the AFCENT and Central Command commander, Lt Gen Derek France.

"It's a great opportunity for us for a number of reasons – one it is the first time the Egyptian Air Force has held a show, and I got the chance to meet the air force chief in person, having talked to him a lot," General France said.

"We didn't send the most cutting-edge aircraft here but let's say we sent 'the seasoned combat jets' [F-15E and A-10C]. They may not be as flashy as others, but they get the job done."

France who has 3,000 flying hours in the F-15C, F-16 and F-22 said, of the USAF presence in the region, "We want to build and

maintain multilateral relationships with all our allies in the region, and one of my focusses is Egypt. We recently held our joint biennial Egyptian-US Bright Star exercise, which is the flagship of the work we do together."

The region is really tense, so one of things we do is to send forces out here to fill our long-term goal is to stabilise the reason – we get a return in value, provides assurance to partners, and long-term stability."

Maintaining regional partnerships is essential to the US. "The US is never going to do anything on its own, because we are spread all over the world," he said.

"The key is to have these partnerships – using the same radios, data-links etc and work the same culture. We even have a pilot on exchange in the Egyptian Air Force."



Getting the job done—AFCENT and Central Command commander, Lt Gen Derek France

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## Safe and sound

Helping front-liners, and responders to keep the public safe—Motorola's Mohamed Al Aboudy

"Motorola isn't just about smart phones and walkie talkies, we have dramatically changed our vision and focusing on a safety and security ecosystem to help protect people and property," said Mohamed Al Aboudy, country manager of exhibitor Motorola Solutions Egypt.

The company has acquired 'various' companies in acquisition deals that are in the software and security domains.

"Our main DNA is to make sure people are secure and safe," said Al Aboudy.

"We help front-liners, and responders to keep the public safe. Obviously, countries like Egypt, and other Middle Eastern and African nations are a focus for us.

"We are looking forward to Egypt being a force for us to extend our technological capabilities, of which we have

built the best possible technologies, to these other countries and penetrate the security and safety market."

The company's customers in the field include; air defence, public safety agencies, enterprises, and communities.

The company has some of its solutions on display including; two-way radios, long range cameras, and its dispatching and cyber security platform.

## BAE Systems focus to aid Egypt's ambitions

BAE Systems is displaying solutions spanning from air defence to cyber security. "This event is a vital platform for us to demonstrate our commitment to Egypt's defence and security needs. Our focus is on building strong, long-term partnerships and supporting Egypt's ambitions in air defence, cyber security, and beyond," said Mary Riad, BAE Systems' Egypt country director.

Technologies being displayed include; Storm EWTM electronic warfare suite and F-16 Ground Support Equipment, Air defence radars, APKWS laser-guidance kit for Apache and Chinook, Eurofighter Typhoon highlighting Typhoon's game-changing capabilities and critical role in delivering air security across the region, and Cyber Security Solutions, which Riad said will help in 'exploring opportunities in Egypt's growing cyber infrastructure.' It also features its advanced unmanned aerial systems (UAS) from BAE Systems' FalconWorks division, including the electric heavy lift UAS, T-650.



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Czech market focus

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Recent sales to Vietnam and the local Czech market have given the L-39NG a substantial boost and now president of Aero Vodochody Aerospace Viktor Sotona has Africa in his sites

## Czechs bounce in Egypt with high hopes

Czech aircraft manufacturer Aero Vodochody Aerospace recently announced both the successful handover of the first six L-39NG jets to its first customer, the Vietnamese Air Force and this month, the first aircraft was also set to be delivered to LOM PRAHA, a domestic company that trains pilots for the Czech Air Force.

But now Aero is now focusing on the African continent, and is exhibiting the L-39NG at the newly inaugurated International Egyptian Airshow. Viktor Sotona, chairman and president of Aero said: "We are returning to the African continent, because we believe the L-39NG has huge potential here. Egypt is strategically located and important in regional security and defence.

"Its growing demand for modern trainer aircraft and its ambition to remain a leading country is a perfect match for Aero's expertise. Our partnership

with Egypt has historical roots dating back to the 1960s when it was a user of several generations of our aircraft.

"We see interest from African countries growing. The versatility and cost-effectiveness of the L-39NG make it an attractive option for countries looking to modernise their training fleet. The L-39NG is a modern successor



**"The L-39NG is the only advanced jet trainer that can offer both Western and Eastern avionics platforms and can be further changed and modified in service"**

**VIKTOR SOTONA**

Aero Vodochody

to the highly successful L-39 Albatros, of which Aero has produced 3,000 units. For many countries around the world, including Africa, the L-39NG represents the easiest transition to modern pilot training."

The L-39NG also comes in the light attack version, which offers air forces a flexible and cost-effective solution for a variety of operational needs.

While serving primarily as an advanced jet trainer. It can also carry a variety of payloads. "The L-39NG has five hard points for a variety of weapons and mission equipment, such as guided and unguided bombs, machine guns, guided and unguided missiles, and additional tanks, up to 1,650 tons," Sotona said. "It can also be used as a light combat aircraft against ground and air targets, including close air support as well as boasting a rapid response capability, unmatched four hours endurance and operational range make it suitable for ISR (Intelligence,

Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) roles such as border and maritime patrol and other missions."

In Egypt, Aero is exploring several cooperative initiatives with the air force, including providing L-39NG aircraft as the backbone of their training programs. The goal is to support Egypt in developing a robust and modernized training program for their pilots.

### MRO plans

"In addition, we have long experience in manufacturing and assembling aircraft in Africa. We are also considering establishing an MRO centre there. This would not only support the L-39NG fleet, but also strengthen local capabilities and provide faster and more efficient service to our customers in the region. We offer solutions tailored to the specific operational and environmental needs of Egypt and African countries, including avionics customisation and munitions compatibility. Our aircraft is non-ITAR so offering unrestricted global operations and simplified aircraft procurement. We are the only platform that supports both Eastern and Western weapon systems, smoothing the transition from Eastern to Western weaponry.

"The L-39NG meets Egypt's requirements for a modern and cost-effective trainer aircraft. With its global platform, it enables the transition to modern fourth and fifth generation fighters such as the F-16, MiG-29 or Rafale.

"Our ground-based training system together with on-board virtual training offers a cutting-edge hybrid training solution and reduces overall training time and cost. The L-39NG is the only advanced jet trainer that can offer both Western and Eastern avionics platforms and can be further changed and modified in service." ▲



**FRONT AND CENTRE**

The L-39NG at the centre of the show's static display

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## Air Cairo in the market to expand fleet

Air Cairo will seek to acquire second-hand Airbus A320s to expand its fleet in the short term, as it prepares to receive the last of a batch of A320neos.

The Egyptian LCC has just received its 16th A320neo, with the final two expected by the end of this year, giving it a total fleet of 28 neo and ceo.

From early next year, however, the company plans to acquire six more A320ceo; four will replace older-vintage A320ceos to keep the fleet's average age down, with the other two for growth, chairman and CEO,

Ahmed Shanan said at the show.

That will take the Airbus fleet to 30, together with three Embraer 190 E1 small narrowbodies and six ATR 72-600 turboprops.

However, the aim is to greatly increase the fleet, taking it to 72 by the end of the decade. Most of the new arrivals will be more A320s, although models have still to be decided upon and "maybe some will be A321neo. We're doing a study on that for specific routes."

Air Cairo is seeking to increase traffic from the UK to Red Sea resorts, for example, and the larger-capacity A321neo would fit



▲ Air Cairo is seeking to increase traffic from the UK to Red Sea resorts, says Air Cairo's Ahmed Shanan

that role well, he said.

Red Sea resorts such as Hurghada, Sharm El Sheikh and Marsa Alam form an important part of Air Cairo's traffic and Shanan said that the intention is to set up a base at Hurghada: "We're planning to put 20 to 25 aircraft in Hurghada, to cover all of Europe."

The Embraers, meanwhile, serve both domestic and short-haul international routes, while the ATRs are used for domestic work.

"We're just planning new routes for the ATRs now," Shanan said. The airline is looking at operating a shuttle service between Aswan and Abu Simbel in Upper Egypt, both major historic sites that attract many tourists, as well as between Aswan and Luxor, to connect with Nile cruises, and from Hurghada and Sharm El Sheikh to the new Sphinx International Airport, on the western edge of Cairo, to allow tourists to visit the new Grand Egyptian Museum.

Despite the current geopolitical unrest in the region, only flights to Sharm El Sheikh have been affected "a little, but the rest are fine".

Air Cairo is owned 60% by EgyptAir and is planning to set up a codeshare arrangement with the flag-carrier; this would see Air Cairo funnelling flights into the Egyptian capital, to connect on to long-haul EgyptAir flights. ▲

## Silver Stars wow the crowd



▲ Rare chance to see the nine K-8Es of the Egyptian Air Force aerobatic team thrill the crowd

One of the highlights in the flying display is the Egyptian Air Force aerobatic team, 'The Silver Stars'. The nine K-8E Korakoram jet trainers painted in red, white and blue colours, have been performing regularly in Egypt for the past 20 years, but for many of the international audience this will be the first chance to see the team.

Like the aircraft, all the pilots come from the Egyptian Air Force Academy

at Belbeis air base. The Chinese jets assembled by Arab Organization for Industrialisation at Helwan, carry the team members call signs on the nose, with the lead No1 aircraft (6351) inscribed with 'Barakat'.

The team's departure from the site, sees all them lifting off in formation in two different groups the first of five (1, 2, 3, 5, 6) and the second with four (4, 7, 8 and 9) following.

A highlight is a thrilling seven-ship bomb burst as two aircraft below cross each other.

Their demonstration usually includes eight different formations that exhilarate the Egyptian crowds. The team was formed in 1974 with four Aero L-29 Delfin jet trainers, and in 1984 were replaced by six Alphajets before they switched to the K-8E in 2003.

BillyPik

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# Egypt: a major US ally but no deals as yet

Last September US Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee said of Egypt. "The United States considers Egypt a crucial partner for Middle East security, and a pillar of regional stability."

Both as an incentive, then a reward, for the Camp David Accords that brought peace between Israel and Egypt in 1978, as a result the two countries quickly became the largest recipients of US security assistance.

Since then, the United States has according to the State Department provided Egypt with more than \$50 billion in military aid and \$30 billion in economic assistance."

US Defense Security Cooperation Agency notifications on behalf of Egypt regularly go

to the US Congress approving a request, but the sales often don't take place. US allies like Egypt regularly get permission before they opt for a purchase.

For example, in January 2022, a \$2.2 billion sale was approved for 12 Lockheed Martin C-130J-30s and other associated equipment, (which seems very expensive) but to date no order has ever been confirmed.

Lockheed Martin's Tim German said about the DSCA notifications. "There have been C-130 requests from several countries in the past, and although you might not hear anything, it doesn't mean nothing is happening."

"We can't talk openly when it comes to FMS contracts and can't discuss these under the government-to-government

Lockheed Martin still hopes Egypt will opt for the C-130J to replace its current fleet of 23 legacy C-130s. This model in Egyptian markings was seen at the Egyptian Defence Exhibition (EDEX) in 2018



agreements until the aircraft turns up in country." Egypt is one of the highest recipients of foreign

military funding, to the tune of an annual \$1.3 billion, making them a major non-NATO ally.

## IOMAX at show to offer AT-802i upgrades?

North Carolina based IOMAX will be making an appearance at the Egyptian International Airshow, undoubtedly with aspirations to upgrade the Egyptian Air Force's 12 AT-802I Block 1 Border Patrol

Aircraft. The company has been supporting the Egyptian aircraft with logistics and spares in recent years.

Converted from an agriculture Air Tractor, the counter-insur-

gency aircraft were previously part of a 24 strong fleet flown by the UAEAF&AD.

IOMAX upgraded several of the fleet, but the UAEAF&AD then disposed of 18, six going to Jordan (subsequently upgraded by IOMAX to Block 4 configuration in 2021/22), with the remainder transferred to Egypt in 2015, to fight Islamist militants in the Sinai peninsula.

When the first RJAF Block 4 AT-802I was handed over to the RJAF in October 2022, IOMAX announced that the solution incorporated an advanced armament control system with a Genesys avionics suite designed for low-cost intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance precision strike aircraft.

Initially IOMAX had offered to upgrade the Egyptian Air Force in 2018 with a new armed control system that had the ability to carry a payload of 1,000lbs, which would

have included new weapons like the 500lb GBU-12 laser guided bomb, AGM-114 Hellfire and 250lb GBU-58 laser JDAM on dual ejection racks under each wing.

The FLIR Brite Star mounted under the noses of the older Block 1s would be replaced by the L3 Wescam MX-15s.

While the UAE examples were armed with the Roketsan Cirit 2.75 inch laser-guided rockets, the poor relations at that time between Egypt and Turkey meant the BAE Systems Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) laser-guided rocket was the preferred option. It's unclear if that still remains the case.

At one point IOMAX had started the APKWS upgrade that would have transformed the Hydra 70 unguided rocket into attacking moving and stationary targets, with low collateral damage. However, it's unclear if the upgrade offered to the EAF was ever implemented.



This early AT-802 BPA of the UAEAF&AD is thought to be one of the 12 that was transferred to Egypt



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# Produced in Egypt! Local strategy meets Korean ambitions

Egypt's State-owned Arab Organisation for Industrialisation (AOI) based at Helwan, announced in January 2023 that an agreement had been reached for the local production of the Korean Aerospace Industries (KAI) T-50 lead-in fighter trainer and FA-50 light attack aircraft.

There are reports that there is a need for about 100. That would tally with the EAF's fleet of K-8E Karakorams which are used by the EAF Air Force Academy at Bilbeis to train fighter pilots.

There are thought to be around 90 K-8Es still in the inventory, but the fleet's Motor Sich AI-25TL turbofan engine is suffering from a lack of spare parts because of the war in Ukraine.

Working with KAI might be one solution but any agreement would surely include the transfer of technology.

AOI has previously license built around 120 Hongdu K-8E Korakoram jet trainers, between 2008 and 2010, that can also be used for light attack.

In its January 2023 statement, AOI said that top company offi-

cial including chairman Mokhtar Abdel-Latif had held discussions with the Korean delegation, that included their counterparts from KAI and Hanwha Aerospace.

At the centre of discussions was not surprisingly technology transfer and localisation of manufacturing the advanced jet trainer to meet EAF requirements. Working with new advanced technologies the T-50/FA-50 would bring, could certainly catapult the Egyptian aerospace industry into the 21st Century.

AOI's Aircraft Factory also overhauls the Chinese jets. In the past, 30 Chinese ASN-209 UAVs have been assembled for tactical reconnaissance.

The company has aspirations to overhaul newer generation aircraft that have been delivered in recent years, like the Dassault Rafale, RAC MiG-29M or even upgrade the Lockheed Martin F-16. AOI certainly has ambitions to increase its work portfolio and working with KAI would help that.

The FA-50 has been an export success for KAI which it launched with US aerospace giant Lockheed



▲ Egypt's AOI has an agreement in principle with Korean Aerospace Industries for the local production of the T-50/FA-50 (seen here). Such a relationship might even lead to investment on KF-21 Boramae (in background) if Egypt has the funds

Martin with Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand all flying them in Asia Pacific. Poland has also bought up to 48 FA-50GF/PL light attack aircraft, with deliveries starting last year.

In May South Korea announced a plan to fund the development of a single-seat Variant of the FA-50,

that would see the current design's rear seat replaced with a 300-gallon auxiliary fuel tank to increase the light attack jet's operational radius by 30%. The Korean government is also looking for investors in its new fifth-gen KF-21 Boramae, and Egypt could show interest if the funding permits. ▲

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## Take a closer look at the A-10 tank-buster



Always nice to see an A-10C Thunderbolt up close, and that's just what you can get in the static display.

The 'tank-buster' as its affectionately referred to, is now in the twilight of its career but is always a big attraction, with its big 30mm gatling gun mounted on the nose.

The example at EIAS is from 107th Fighter Squadron/Michigan ANG known as 'The Red Devils' and is one of a number currently deployed to the region.



### ▲ NEWS IN BRIEF

## Saudi aviation reform on show

Saudi Arabia's regulatory reform has made a dramatic impact on the Kingdom's aviation sector, and regulator GACA, is at the show to share the background story.

GACA president Abdulaziz Al-Duailej, met with Egyptian counterparts. The two countries have a thriving aviation relationship, demonstrated by the pilgrimage route that transports thousands of Egyptian pilgrims to the Kingdom each year and the high level of connectivity between the two nations, with the KSA-Egypt route being one of the busiest in the Middle East.

From 2022 to 2023, the number of passengers flying between Saudi Arabia and Egypt increased by 73% to 10.2 million, and the number of flights increased by 71% to almost 65,000.

GACA has introduced major economic policy reforms, a general aviation roadmap, and pioneered new Advanced Air Mobility regulations to enable growth and innovation.

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