



JAPAN AIR SELF-DEFENSE FORCE HIGHLIGHTS KAWASAKI C-2 NEXT-GEN AIRLIFTER

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The Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) unveiled its C-2 next-generation transport aircraft, currently under development, at its base in Kakamigahara, Gifu Prefecture, on Tuesday March 15, the local daily Japan Times said.

The C-2, the successor to the existing C-1 transport plane, is capable of carrying the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) surface-to-air missile system and the Ground Self-Defense Force's UH-60 multipurpose helicopter.

The JASDF aims to deploy the C-2 within fiscal 2016, which ends in March 2017, after conducting more test flights and strength tests.

The twin-engine C-2, about 44 meters long and wide, and 14 meters tall, has a maximum loading capacity of about 30 tons — about four times that of the C-1 — and a flight range of 6,500 km, also four times more. The C-2 is powered by two GE CF6-80C2K1F engines designed and manufactured by General Electric Aviation and can at a maximum speed of 890km/h.

With the C-2, the JASDF will be able to transport more personnel and goods promptly in operations and in times of emergencies in and around Japan, and international activities, including peacekeeping operations.

Led by Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd., the C-2 development project started in 2001, but faced delays of five years from its initial schedule due to technical problems, including the discovery of a crack during a strength test.

Development costs are now estimated to hit US\$2.32 billion, US\$704 million more than initially projected.

The Japanese Defense Ministry plans to procure three C-2 planes in fiscal 2016, each with a price tag of about US\$176 million.

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