



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

The Airbus and Boeing market race became more exciting after the Dubai Air Show



The race between Airbus and Boeing, the 2 biggest commercial aircraft manufacturers worldwide, has become increasingly intriguing, but not more uncertain, following this year's Dubai Air Show.

One of the world's largest trade shows regarding deals between aircraft manufacturers and customers takes place at the end of a fantastic year for the industry.

A record 1,667 commercial aircraft were ordered worldwide in the first half of the year, a 130% increase compared the same period in 2022. Air India's massive order of 840 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing, with options to purchase a further 370 aircraft, was largely responsible for this rise.

The upward trend has been continued at the Dubai Air Show, particularly for the US manufacturer. At the beginning, Emirates Airlines announced a large order worth \$52 billion for 95 widebody jets - 90 from the 777 series and five 787 Dreamliners.

A large order has been announced by Ethiopian Airlines, Boeing's largest African customer, for 11 widebody 787s, with an option for an additional 15 Dreamliners and 21 737 MAXs.

Low-cost FlyDubai, which only operated narrowbody 737s, announced the launch of long-distance routes and ordered 30 Boeing 787-9s worth about \$11 billion.

Boeing also secured a deal with Sun Express, a joint venture between Turkish Airlines and Lufthansa, for 90 737s.

Airbus still on hold with Emirates

The American manufacturer could be more satisfied with the big deals made in Dubai than its mega-competitor Airbus, at least for now, particularly after a good start last October, when Boeing received 117 new orders, primarily thanks to Southwest Airlines.

Airbus received an order for 30 A220s from Air Baltic at the start of the Dubai Air Show. Its purchase list now stands at 80 of these aircraft, making it the largest narrowbody A220 customer in Europe.

During the Dubai Air Show, the Ethiopian company announced a Memorandum of Understanding regarding purchasing 11 widebody A350s.

However, Airbus will definitely not be able to count on orders from a principal customer, Emirates Airline, anytime soon, as its president Tim Clark has indicated that he would delay the purchase of the A350, as they are dissatisfied with the performance of the engines produced by Rolls-Royce.

According to Mr Clark, Emirates is prepared to order 35 to 50 aircraft if the engine manufacturer improves durability and reduces maintenance costs. For now, the Gulf's largest airline remains more loyal to Boeing despite past delivery delays.

"I'm kind of more confident now on the 777-9, that certainly Boeing will get that after all, it's fine. I'm reassured by the head of GE that the GenX engine will be good to go and meet all the contract specs. So based on that, there's a large amount of trust, we've placed their order", said Mr Clark to reporters in Dubai.

Possible good news for Boeing from China

The end-of-the-year estimates place Airbus in the lead regarding the number of orders and deliveries, even though they will be happier with the American manufacturer than the European concern following the Dubai Air Show.

According to estimates, Airbus will end this year with about 200 more delivered planes than its American competitor and about 300 more orders.

This difference might narrow if expectations

that China could unfreeze the procurement of Boeing's 737s after a multi-year blockade prove accurate.

After the 2 catastrophic accidents of Boeing's 737-Max in 2018 and its withdrawal from the market, Chinese carriers have reoriented their purchases from Airbus.

However, an end to this Boeing model blockade might be achieved during the US-China summit in San Francisco within the framework of APEC.

China's President Xi Jinping could make this announcement during talks with US President Joe Biden as a sign of goodwill to resolve at least part of the strained trade issues between the world's 2 largest economies.

"I'm optimistic about the discussions that are going to occur in San Francisco. It's too early to predict whether an agreement will be reached. Our job is going to be, deliver airplanes one at a time and express to the Chinese the need to replace their fleets and provide growth for the future", said Stan Deal, head of Boeing's commercial aircraft unit, in Dubai.