

RAFALE CEREMONY JULY 21st JULY 2021

Honorable Minister of National Defence

Chief of Hellenic National Defence General Staff

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Dassault Aviation Mr. Éric Trappier

Personnel of Hellenic Air Force

Representatives and Personnel from Dassault Aviation, MBDA Missile Systems, Safran Aircraft Engines and Thales France

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to extend my deepest gratitude to all distinguished guests being here today at Dassault Aviation facilities in Istr, for this truly historical moment, the introduction of Rafale F3R aircraft to the Hellenic Air Force. And of course I am honored to be here as the Chief of the Hellenic Air Force in a ceremony that symbolizes the beginning of a new era for our Air Force and represents our capability and credibility to secure peace and stability in our region.

Over the past decades the Hellenic Air Force has successfully included an eminent amount of French aircraft in its fleet, started in 1976 with the acquisition of Mirage F1, continued in the 1980s with the Mirage 2000 and afterwards with the Mirage 2000-5 delivered in 2007. And now we are opening a new chapter with the acquisition of the Rafale F3R, a sophisticated fighter aircraft which from today constitutes the state of the art for the Hellenic Air Force arsenal. It is also worthy to mention that the contracts with Dassault Aviation, MBDA Missile Systems, Safran Aircraft Engines and Thales France, compose a full package of acquisition, which includes the aircraft along with their weapons combined with a follow on support.

Rafale acquisition is also a tangible confirmation of the excellent cooperation and long standing relationship between Greece and France, which share the same values and prove in practice their respect to the international law as well as their shared commitment to regional and global stability. Our bonds have especially strengthened lately, and this is provided, among others, by the degree we have developed our military cooperation. It extends to high profile exercises such as VOLFA,

INIOCHOS and SKYROS, which give the opportunity to our aircrews to work as a team, to fly together within mixed fighter formations and to implement advanced air tactics. This is particularly important today and as we are looking to the next decades, where the security environment becomes more complex and challenging.

Rafale F3R is an air platform that incorporates such technological innovations that will enable the rapid and efficient response to any emerging threat within the Hellenic Flight Information Region and up to East Mediterranean. The advanced operational capabilities of the aircraft in conjunction with its incredible strength, weapons and range capacity and considerably improved situation awareness, will ensure superiority and dominance in the air domain and will support our deterrence objectives. Capitalizing on the key advantage of the airpower it can deliver strategic effects across the full spectrum of air operations, from strategic attacks, up to air operations against naval surface forces and within ranges that exert the ones of our potential adversaries. Therefore it sends a clear message that demonstrates our capability and credibility to address current and future threats.

I will end by congratulating all involved, in particular the personnel of Hellenic Air Force and the personnel from Dassault Aviation, MBDA Missile Systems Safran Aircraft Engines and Thales France, for making this possible in such a short timeframe and despite the challenges of the pandemic situation. It is of great expectation to see our airmen exploring the full potential of the Rafale F3R, its operational integration as well as the impact to the operational environment.

Today we look into the future with great confidence.

Congratulation to all for this historic occasion.

I wish safe flights and successful missions.

Thank you very much.