

In releasing its 2009 results, Pilatus says that order intake in 2010 continues to be "sluggish" making it only the latest of several business aircraft makers to report the crisis is far from over.

"We have not yet seen the back of the global financial and economic crisis," the company reports, adding, "we must now focus our attention on security sales of the PC12NG this year and next."

The downturn led Pilatus to lose 72 net orders, on a gross order intake of 21 orders. The company delivered a record 100 PC-12s, all in the NG configuration. The bulk of the deliveries went to North America, with 46 units going to U.S. customers, eleven to Canada, and three to Mexico. The company also sold PC-6s, but last year suffered a lull in military trainer deliveries.

Nevertheless, sales last year remained strong, with 105 aircraft handed to customers and 620 million Swiss francs (\$580 million) booked. Research and development spending remained high, at 41 million francs, reflecting work on the PC-12 and health and usage monitoring system for the PC-21 trainer.

The PC-21 order from the United Arab Emirates, placed in November, was not just the largest in the company's history, it also allowed Pilatus to focus on rehiring and removing work time restrictions on employees. The company plans to add 100 staff this year. Representatives from 25 countries visited Pilatus's Stans facility, indicating further interest in the PC-21.

By Robert Wall wall@aviationweek.com (4/7/2010)
LONDON

