DASSAULT, FEDEX DISCUSS POTENTIAL FALCON ORDER

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FedEx has commenced discussions with **Dassault** on a possible order for new **Falcon** business jets, a top Dassault executive said on 17 September.

FedEx chief executive Fred Smith launched the express delivery service with a fleet of Falcon 20s in 1973. But the entire fleet was retired by 1985, replaced by larger Boeing 727s and Douglas DC-10s.

In recent weeks, however, Smith has re-engaged with Dassault in sales discussions, says Jean Rosanvallon, executive vice-president of civil aviation for Dassault and president and CEO of the US-based Falcon Jet USA subsidiary.

After tracing Dassault's historical linkage with Smith and FedEx, Rosanvallon told a small audience at the American Business Forum On Europe that there has been a recent development in the relationship.

"I met Fred Smith just a few weeks ago," Rosanvallon says, "and we are discussing that maybe

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we’ll upgrade to a bigger Falcon soon.”

Asked to elaborate later, Rosanallon clarified that FedEx is interested in a new freighter to replace turboprop. The turboprops became part of FedEx’s fleet due to political pressure, he adds, but FedEx has always wanted to get back into operating converted jets for cargo operations.

In addition to offering several Airbus and Boeing types, FedEx also operates a fleet of ATR 72, ATR 42 and Cessna 208 Caravan aircraft.

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