

Boeing Completes NATO AWACS Upgrade Contract

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Boeing has completed its Mod Block 1 contract to upgrade NATO's fleet of 17 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft. The company oversaw the design, integration, production and retrofit of four major mission system-related enhancements. Awarded in early 1993 by the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Program Management Organization (NAPMO), the contract was amended in 1994 to include Electronic Support Measures (ESM) upgrades.

The Mod Block 1 enhancements include: new color displays, which will improve the form and usability of incoming situational information; Have Quick radios, which will enhance UHF communications by adding security and anti-jamming features; and a version of the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS), called Link 16, which will increase the amount of information that can be collected and distributed among other AWACS planes, allied aircraft and ground stations to a degree not previously available.

ESM, developed by Boeing under joint funding from the U.S. Air Force and NATO, is a passive listening and detection system, which enables AWACS to detect, identify and track electronic transmissions from ground, airborne and maritime sources. Using the ESM system, mission operators can determine radar and weapon system type and location.

Jim Stahlkopf, Boeing Mod Block 1 analysis integration team manager, said NATO is pleased with the performance of the upgrades, already used extensively during Bosnia missions.

"NATO also is very happy with our performance," Stahlkopf added. "Boeing efforts, combined with the outstanding support of our subcontractors, resulted in on- or ahead-of-schedule delivery performance throughout the life of the contract."

Several Boeing subcontractors were involved in the NATO upgrade effort. Rockwell Collins provided the JTIDS hardware; GEC Marconi formerly Hazeltine, provided the color displays; and EG&G Almond, Magnavox and Xetron supplied Have Quick Radio equipment.

Also, Cherokee Nations Industries supplied insulated wire and cables; and SABCA of Belgium, Danish Aerotech of Denmark and Fokker of the Netherlands provided ESM components. The retrofit work was done by Daimler-Benz (Dasa) in Manching, Germany.

The E-3 AWACS fills the needs of both airborne surveillance, and command, control and communications functions for air and maritime forces. An "eye-in-the-sky," the AWACS has a 360-degree view of the horizon, and can track both air and sea targets simultaneously.

Boeing-built AWACS are in service worldwide with the U.S., NATO, United Kingdom, French and Saudi Arabian air forces.

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