Boeing JASSM Performs Successful Missile Separation Test

The Boeing Company has successfully conducted the first aircraft separation flight test of its Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM).

The Jan. 26 missile separation test was conducted from an F-16 C/D flying over the Gulf of Mexico from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. As predicted, the full-scale missile separated safely from the aircraft and flew a stable trajectory into the water below.

"This is an important step in demonstrating the validity of our aerodynamic design and our missile's ability to safely launch from the F-16 C/D," said Jim Gates, vice president and program manager for JASSM in the Boeing Phantom Works.

The purpose of separation testing is to determine how accurately the behavior of a launched missile can be predicted using trajectory analyses and aerodynamic data derived from wind tunnel testing. Successful predictions about separating from the F-16 C/D support the ability to predict successful separations from other aircraft as well.

In the flight test, the F-16 C/D released the full-scale JASSM vehicle at an altitude of 5,000 feet and a speed of Mach 0.8. According to the pilot, Maj. Roger Vincent, the vehicle "released cleanly and flew a smooth trajectory to impact."

According to John Gilbert, JASSM command and launch integrated product team leader in the Phantom Works, all of the visual and recorded flight data met or exceeded the predicted results. "This test confirmed the inherent stability of our airframe upon release from a launch aircraft," he said. "Our wind tunnel test data and analysis predict similar performance throughout the entire launch and jettison envelope."

The separation test was preceded on Jan. 14 by an initial captive flight test using a full-scale instrumented measurement vehicle. Additional captive flight and separation tests on an F-16 C/D are scheduled in February.

The Boeing JASSM program is being conducted in the Phantom Works in St. Louis, Mo. The program is on schedule and on budget and offers an affordable, effective, low risk weapon system solution that meets all requirements and provides other significant operational benefits as well.

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