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Boeing today announced the first U.S. Air Force E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft has been retrofitted with a radar system improvement program (RSIP) kit. The Air Force has eight production kits on order with an option for five more. Additional kits to retrofit the fleet will be contracted separately.

Boeing also announced that installation of an RSIP kit has begun on the first of seven United Kingdom AWACS aircraft. Along with the RSIP upgrade will be installation of new Global Positioning System navigation equipment. Retrofit on the rest of the fleet will be completed in 2001.

Work on the U.S. AWACS aircraft was completed by depot maintenance personnel at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. British Aerospace, under subcontract to Boeing, is doing the retrofit of the U.K. AWACS aircraft at the Royal Air Force Base in Waddington, England.

Additionally, Daimler Benz Aerospace (Dasa), under subcontract to Boeing, has installed kits on two NATO AWACS aircraft. Retrofit of the rest of the fleet of 17 aircraft will be completed in 2000.

The RSIP kit consists of a new radar computer, a radar control maintenance panel and electrical and mechanical hardware.

RSIP improves the E-3's radar by increasing the sensitivity of the pulse Doppler radar so the aircraft can detect and track smaller stealthy targets. It also improves the radar's electronics counter-countermeasures capability, making it harder to jam the system. RSIP upgrades the radar's existing computer with a new high-reliability multi processor, and rewrites the software to make it easier to maintain and enhance in the future.

"The RSIP upgrade continues the outstanding teamwork between government agencies and Boeing and its industry partners to modernize the E-3 fleet. It will significantly enhance the capability of the AWACS radar," said Ross Dessert, RSIP program manager.

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