Boeing Reaches Major System Integration Milestone on Nimrod Maritime Patrol Program

Boeing has achieved a significant milestone with the completion of a Systems Integration Laboratory and the successful loading of the first operational software for the United Kingdom's Nimrod MRA 4 maritime patrol program. This marks the program's first integration of flight hardware and software, which was accomplished ahead of schedule.

Boeing has a $639 million contract with British Aerospace to replace the Tactical Command System (TCS) on 21 Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft. The TCS is the heart of the mission avionics and aircraft upgrade, which will extend the capability of the Nimrod aircraft well into the 21st century.

The Systems Integration Laboratory will be used to test and qualify the major sensor systems being developed by Boeing. These include new radar, electronic support measures, electro-optical viewing system, underwater acoustics detection and locating system, and magnetic anomaly detectors. In addition, the Boeing Tactical Command System integrates the communications, defensive aids and armament control subsystems provided by other vendors.

Completion of the lab begins a 15-month integration testing program leading to formal qualification testing of the Tactical Command and Sensor System in mid-2000. The first scheduled flight of the refurbished Nimrod aircraft is scheduled for the third quarter of 2000.

Patrick Gill, Boeing Nimrod MRA 4 program manager, said, "Our team is incredibly dedicated and focused. We have not missed one major milestone in the two years we have been developing the software. And now, we have the lab up and running ahead of schedule."

The Boeing team is comprised of engineers and support personnel from Boeing sites across the country, including Seattle, Huntsville, Ala., Houston, Philadelphia and St. Louis. The Boeing employees are complemented by more than 120 engineers and technicians from the United Kingdom.

The Boeing work is part of a larger upgrade effort by prime contractor British Aerospace that will include new wings, engines, general systems and flight avionics. The $3 billion fixed-price contract includes development, production post-delivery support and full training capability. The first operational aircraft will be delivered in 2001, with the last aircraft delivered five years later. Boeing will provide post-delivery support under the initial contract through 2008.

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