Comanche Program, U.S. Army Sign MOU on Pre-Production Program

The Boeing Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche Joint Program Office and the U.S. Army have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that defines the Comanche program's engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) phase and establishes an innovative working partnership between the Army and the contracting team.

The MOU calls for "a cultural change in the way Comanche requirements are communicated, in the way Boeing Sikorsky implements these requirements, and in the way and time frame in which the Pre-Production Program (PPP) proposal and resultant Engineering and Manufacturing Development program contract is prepared, evaluated, negotiated and awarded."

Speaking for the Comanche Team, Arthur Linden, vice president and director, Boeing Sikorsky Joint Program Office, said, "This MOU is really a reflection of the close working relationship we have with our U.S. Army customer. We plan to meet or exceed all the program requirements on performance, cost and schedule, and formalizing that commitment is an expression of our confidence in our team members, suppliers, customers and evaluators that they will ensure Comanche is remembered in the future as a paradigm of successful defense procurement."

Maj. Gen.(P) Joseph Bergantz, the Army Comanche Program Manager, said, "Using Alpha contracting over the last several months has saved the Army considerable time and significant funding by not requiring a formal proposal board and a traditional evaluation."

The agreement reflects maximum focus on acquisition streamlining, maintaining the innovative Integrated Product Team process used throughout the program, facilitate communication processes, and promote increased teamwork between Boeing Sikorsky and its government customers.

The Comanche team has agreed to complete the PPP program in fiscal year 2006 at a total cost of $3.6 billion.

Features of the Comanche PPP program are:

- Design and fabrication of 13 Comanche helicopters with production mission equipment package capability from FY 2003 through FY 2005 for Army experiments and further operational test and evaluation;
- Accelerated Comanche fire control radar development from RAH-66 production Lot 6 in FY 2010 to initial operational capability aircraft, fielded in FY 2006;
- A Defense Department Milestone II EMD decision accelerated 19 months to March 2000;
- Simulation tools suitable for analysis of the Comanche's full capabilities for development of operational tactics, techniques and procedures based on full functionality; and
- Risk reduction in such developmental areas as the aircraft's helmet, software and Electro-Optical Sensor System to optimize program efforts within available funding levels.

The RAH-66 Comanche armed reconnaissance helicopter is under development for the U.S. Army by a team headed by The Boeing Company and Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., a unit of United Technologies.

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