

Boeing Awarded Long-Lead Contract For NATO AWACS Upgrade

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The Boeing Company [BA-NYSE] has received a \$24 million long-lead production contract to continue a major upgrade of NATO's fleet of 17 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft. This upgrade includes the integration of state-of-the-art enhancements to the fleet's computers, displays, communications, navigation and target identification systems, as part of the Mid-Term Modernization Program.

The contract was awarded by Electronic Systems Center, Hanscom, Air Force Base, Mass., acting as agent for the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Program Management Agency in Brunssum, The Netherlands.

Steve Behnen, Boeing NATO AWACS program manager, said, "This contract is significant because it protects the production schedule for this important upgrade to the NATO AWACS fleet. It allows us to proceed by putting needed production processes in place with our subcontractors and by ordering critical parts that have long lead times."

One aircraft, modified as part of an engineering, manufacturing and development contract under the Mid-Term Modernization Program, is undergoing flight testing. The rest of the fleet will be upgraded under a production and retrofit contract expected to be awarded in 2002.

The enhancements include:

- Fourteen new operator consoles incorporating flat panel situation displays with a Windows-like environment to support the interaction between operators and sensor systems increasing the operator's situational awareness;
- A new mission computing system implementing advanced Multi-Sensor Integration which will improve the reliability and accuracy of target tracking and identification, automated recording and replay of mission data, and an open-system architecture supporting cost-effective future upgrades to hardware and software;
- Digital communications systems to improve crew management and use of radio links. Satellite communications will be integrated into the mission system for over-the-horizon communications links. Broad-spectrum VHF radios that will support improved interoperability with Eastern European nations' air and ground forces;
- Improved Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) interrogators and transponders that will be compatible with emerging international air traffic control systems requirements.
- Upgraded aircraft navigation that takes advantage of the new Global Positioning System.

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