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To help meet its growing need for an affordable, effective, miniaturized munition, the U.S. Air Force has awarded a two-year, \$47 million contract to The Boeing Company (NYSE: BA) to begin developing a Small Diameter Bomb system for manned and unmanned aircraft.

The system includes two variants of the Small Diameter Bomb, a bomb carriage system, a mission planning system and logistics support. One variant of the 250-pound class bomb is equipped with an INS/GPS guidance system suitable for fixed and stationary targets. The second variant adds a terminal seeker with automatic target recognition capabilities more suitable for mobile and relocatable targets. Boeing has joined with Northrop Grumman on the mobile target variant.

"The size and accuracy of small diameter bombs allows aircraft to carry more munitions to more targets and strike them more effectively with less collateral damage," said Dan Jaspering, the Small Diameter Bomb program manager for the Boeing Phantom Works. "We are thrilled to be selected for this program and will rely on our technology base and strong supplier team to move out very quickly."

Because of its capabilities, the Small Diameter Bomb system is an important element of the Air Force's Global Strike Task Force. Under the official title of "Component Advanced Development for the Small Diameter Bomb," the program is being conducted by the Air Armament Center and the Air Force Research Laboratory Flight Vehicles Integration Branch located at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The Boeing Phantom Works R&D unit has successfully conducted a number of miniature munitions programs that have led to this current program. These include the Miniature Munitions Technology Program, which performed five consecutive highly successful drop tests; the Small Smart Bomb Range EXtension, which also successfully completed several flight tests; and the Smart Multiple Ejector Rack, which allows greater payload carriage with reduced maintenance.

Boeing's Small Diameter Bomb program also builds on the Joint Direct Attack Munition, or JDAM, which Phantom Works helped develop and which has achieved a strong legacy of accuracy and reliability. More than 11,000 JDAMs have been delivered on time and on cost from Boeing's St. Charles, Mo., facility, where the Small Diameter Bomb team is located.

And like the JDAM program, the source selection process used by the Air Force for the Component Advanced Development phase of the Small Diameter Bomb program included acquisition reforms that significantly simplified and accelerated the process. These reforms included extensive exchanges of information with industry, oral proposals, and limiting submitted data to only that essential for the decision.

Within only five months after posting of the request for proposal, the Air Force was able to award the two contracts planned for this competition - one to Boeing, the other to Lockheed Martin. At the end of this phase of the Small Diameter Bomb program, the Air Force will select a single contractor to perform both the System Development and Demonstration phase and the Production phase of the program.

The Air Force hopes to deploy the Small Diameter Bomb System by 2006 on the F-15E, followed by deployment on several other aircraft, including the F-22, JSF, F-16, B-2 and the Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle, which is under development by Boeing.

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