Boeing Awarded $37.6-Million Contract To Upgrade NATO AWACS Fleet

The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] has received a $37.6-million contract to enhance the flight deck of NATO's fleet of 17 E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft.

Under the contract, the fleet's flight deck systems will be upgraded to meet near-term European civil air requirements for reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM). RVSM will allow the E-3s to operate in areas where the air traffic control vertical separation requirements have been reduced to handle increased air traffic.

Additionally, the AWACS aircraft will be outfitted with an Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS). ACAS works with the aircraft's Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) transponder to detect other aircraft within ACAS protected airspace. If an aircraft comes too close, the system sounds an alert and provides a message (climb or descend) to the AWACS flight crew to avoid a collision.

The upgrades are expected to be completed in 2003-2005. As prime contractor, Boeing will be responsible for the engineering design, hardware kit build, system integration, analysis, and certification support. Rockwell Collins will provide the ACAS computer, antenna system, and integrated vertical speed / ACAS cockpit display. European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) will provide an upgraded IFF transponder, Honeywell Corp. will upgrade the air data computers, and Innovative Solutions and Support will provide the RVSM altitude alerter. Installation, checkout, and flight testing will be done by EADS at its facility in Manching, Germany.

"These upgrades will allow the NATO AWACS fleet to continue to fly in civil airspace without restrictions, preserving their ability to fly optimal flight profiles with increased safety," said Paul Kiehn, Boeing RVSM/ACAS program manager.

AWACS is the world's standard for airborne early warning & control systems. The system is currently integrated into militarized 707 and 767 aircraft, and fills the need for both airborne surveillance and command and control functions for tactical and air defense forces.

The Boeing Company, headquartered in Chicago, is the largest aerospace company in the world and the United States' leading exporter. It is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial jetliners and military aircraft, and the largest NASA contractor. The company's capabilities in aerospace also include rotorcraft, electronic and defense systems, missiles, rocket engines, launch vehicles, satellites, and advanced information and communication systems. The company has an extensive global reach with customers in 145 countries and manufacturing operations throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

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