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Officials from Boeing (NYSE:BA) and the Italian Ministry of Defense have signed the final contract for four new 767 Tanker Transport aircraft and five years of contractor logistics support.

Italy became the first customer for the 767 Tanker Transport last year when it selected the aircraft in a competition to replace aging 707 tankers in the Italian Air Force.

"The successful negotiation of this contract between the Italian Ministry of Defense and Boeing marks a key milestone in establishing the 767 Tanker Transport as the perfect solution for air-refueling needs around the world," said Bob Gower, vice president of tanker programs for Boeing. "This contract is the result of great teamwork and highlights a continued commitment by Boeing to the Italian government and our Italian industry partner, Alenia Aeronautica, along with its subsidiary Aeronavali."

The Italian Air Force will receive its first 767 Tanker Transport in 2005, with deliveries continuing until early 2008. The first aircraft will be modified into a tanker configuration at the Boeing facility in Wichita, Kan. The three subsequent aircraft will be modified by Aeronavali at its facility near Naples, Italy.

The 767 Tanker Transport for the Italian Air Force is based on the Boeing 767-200ER commercial transport. It will be powered by General Electric CF6-80C2 engines and configured with a Boeing air-refueling boom, RARO II remote air-refueling operator station, wing pods and centerline hose-and-drogue refueling systems and refueling receptacle. The aircraft is equipped with a cargo door and a combi interior, which allows the main deck to carry all passengers, all cargo, or passengers and cargo simultaneously.

Boeing currently has more than 600 people working on the commercial development of the 767 Tanker Transport.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a \$23 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

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