Boeing Propulsion System Nails Critical Defense System Tests

A new propulsion system built by The Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power business unit of the Integrated Defense Systems of The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] has demonstrated its unique capabilities. Called a DACS -- for divert and attitude and control system -- this propulsion system will provide maneuvering capabilities for the Missile Defense Agency's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ballistic missile defense system, for which Lockheed Martin Corporation [NYSE: LMT] is prime contractor.

In mid-July, and again in late August of this year, the DACS successfully completed two demanding hot-fire performance trials called the System Flight Certification Unit -- or SFCU -- tests. The tests were conducted in cold temperatures and vacuum conditions for a full "mission" simulation, with over 2000 thruster pulses and 70-plus firing sequences, confirming compliance with all Block 4 THAAD requirements.

"This recent success underscores Boeing's leadership in liquid-fueled thruster systems, and is the latest milestone in a capability that goes back for more than three decades," said Byron Wood, vice president and general manager of Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power. "The tests demonstrate the kind of performance and reliability we can -- and do -- achieve."

The summer test series follows successful testing of the individual liquid-fueled rocket thrusters, as well as a successful hot-fire design verification test of the entire DACS, which emulated a typical enemy missile intercept mission. Those tests were conducted at the Air Force Research Laboratory at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

Detailed post-test analysis of the SFCU data is in progress and expected to demonstrate that the DACS design is in full compliance with its specified system level requirements. The completion of these tests is a significant milestone on the path to flight testing the THAAD weapon system.

THAAD is a critical element of the Missile Defense Agency's Ballistic Missile Defense System and is designed to intercept incoming ballistic missiles at very high altitudes, far away from the critical military and civilian assets it is intended to protect.

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 $27 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; 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 and Department of Homeland Security; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.
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