U.S. Army, Boeing Sign First Block III Apache Longbow RDT&E Contract, Set Stage for Long-Term Modernization Program

The U.S. Army paved the way for continued modernization of the world's most capable multi-role combat helicopter by signing the first production engineering contract with Boeing (NYSE: BA) for Block III AH-64D Apache Longbows.

The research, development, test and evaluation contract, signed in a virtual ceremony June 28 in Washington, D.C., Huntsville, Ala., and Mesa, Ariz., provides FY05 funding of non-recurring engineering costs for Block III enhancements for Apache Longbow attack helicopters. The total value for Boeing of the developmental contract is $27.2 million. Additional contracts, for further engineering and production work, are anticipated as the program matures.

"The Block III technologies have been selected in answer to requirements specified by the U.S. Army's Apache Operational Requirement Document," said Al Winn, Boeing vice president of Apache programs. "Army and Boeing leadership listened to battlefield commanders and aviators to make certain that the Block III technologies enhance crew effectiveness."

Production of Block III Apaches will begin in 2010 following completion of current Apache production work that has been on-going in Mesa, Ariz. since the Apache program began.

Apache Longbow Block III incorporates 25 technology insertions, providing Network-Centric warfare capabilities in the multi-role combat helicopter for the Army's future force. To enable battlespace dominance, the program will incoporate open systems architecture, wideband network communications, extended range sensing, level IV unmanned aerial vehicle control, extended range fire control radar, extended range missiles, and data fusion to merge off- and on-board sensor imagery.

With improved aircraft flight performance and reduced operations and support costs, the modernized helicopter will be an important bridge to the future for the U.S. Army. The Block III Apache Longbow will interface with today's Stryker Brigade Combat Teams and Future Combat Systems with a fully compatible and rapidly reconfigurable open systems architecture mission processor design. Other key benefits to the U.S. Army include a reduced logistics footprint, and improved readiness and deployability.

The virtual signing ceremony was conducted simultaneously in three time zones. U.S. Army and Boeing leaders signed the contract that will ensure that Army warfighters and joint operations forces commanders are equipped with a modernized helicopter that can be deployed and interface effectively with joint forces, coordinating information and weapons capabilities in battle.

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 $30.5 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; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.
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