Boeing Completes First Airborne Test of Wedgetail Aircraft's Radar

Boeing [NYSE: BA] successfully conducted the first in-flight test of the Northrop Grumman Multi-mode Electronically Scanned Array radar aboard a 737 airborne early warning and control aircraft for Australia's Project Wedgetail.

"The mission was flawless," said Jack DeLange, 737 AEW&C integration and test manager. "All of the first radar flight test objectives were achieved."

The six-hour flight test over Washington state followed completion of three weeks of ground testing of the radar in Victorville, Calif. The ground testing verified the compatibility of the radar with other aircraft systems while operating and scanning through 360 degrees.

The initial flight test aboard Wedgetail aircraft No. 1 collected data used to calibrate the radar for the effects of both the aircraft and the ground environment.

Flight testing of the radar, integrated with the airborne mission system aboard Wedgetail aircraft No. 2, is scheduled to begin later this year. This follows several years of extensive stand-alone ground testing by Northrop Grumman's Electronic Systems Division in Baltimore, Md.

The Multi-mode Electronically Scanned Array radar is designed to provide optimal performance in range, tracking, and accuracy. It is able to track airborne and maritime targets simultaneously and can help the mission crew direct the control of high-performance fighter aircraft while continuously scanning the operational area.

Australia has purchased six 737 airborne early warning and control aircraft. Delivery of the first two aircraft is scheduled in 2006.

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