Global Tanker Team to Deliver Boeing Advanced Aerial-Refueling Tanker

The Boeing Company (NYSE: BA) announced today the industry Global Tanker Team currently working on aerial refueling tankers for Italy and Japan has agreed to partner should the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Air Force determine a new aircraft is the best solution for replacing the KC-135.

The team includes Boeing; Smiths Aerospace; Rockwell Collins; Vought Aircraft Industries; Aeronavali (a company of Alenia Aeronautica/Finmeccanica); Honeywell; GE Aircraft Engines and Pratt & Whitney.

The announcement was made by George Muellner, vice president and general manager of Boeing's Air Force Systems business, while speaking at the Air Force Association meeting in Washington, D.C.

"This is a skilled team with more than 75 years of experience in aerial-refueling technology, integrated systems, and aircraft manufacturing and modification," Muellner said. "As industry partners we have been working together for more than two years to design and deliver the Boeing advanced aerial refueling tanker."

The Global Tanker Team convened recently in St. Louis, committing to deliver the most advanced aerial refueling capability for its global customers.

"The Boeing 767 advanced aerial refueling tanker, which was selected by two of our allies -- Italy and Japan -- is in production and flight-test today," Muellner said. "In addition, Boeing has a complete family of aircraft to ensure requirements as defined by the U.S. Air Force can be met. With the support and participation of these great partners, we look forward to a competition."

The first Italian Air Force KC-767A advanced aerial refueling tanker has completed the initial phase of its flight test program. It first flew in May 2005, and is scheduled for delivery in mid-2006. The first KC-767 for the Japan Air Self Defense Force arrived in Wichita, Kan., for conversion to a KC-767 tanker in June and is scheduled for delivery in December 2006.

"Boeing 's Global Tanker Team takes advantage of 75 years of tanker platform experience to reduce the developmental risk for all our customers," Muellner said. "This includes proven expertise in network centric operations and integrated avionics solutions, lean manufacturing concepts, and advanced aerial refueling systems. With this experience and our new tanker aircraft flying right now, Boeing can deliver a proven aerial refueling aircraft years before the competition. Operations analysis of publicly available information shows the state-of-the-art KC-767 outperforms the competition in operating costs, fuel burn, ramp-capacity optimization, and runway-length optimization. These advantages add up to more refueling aircraft based in-theater and greater flexibility for the warfighter and planner alike."

Because the Boeing USAF KC-767 will be designed, manufactured, modified and finished in the United States, the program could support significantly more U.S. aerospace jobs than any other competitor. Boeing tanker programs have more than 1,000 direct and indirect (suppliers to direct suppliers) supplier locations in more than 40 states.

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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