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Boeing [NYSE: BA] has completed ahead of schedule the installation of Radar System Improvement Program (RSIP) kits on France's fleet of four E-3F Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft.

"This is the most significant upgrade to the French AWACS fleet since its initial delivery in the early 1990s," said Chad Hammond, Boeing French RSIP program manager.

Boeing completed the modifications through a \$143 million Foreign Military Sales contract via the Electronic Systems Center at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass.

The RSIP kit increases the aircraft's radar sensitivity, allowing it to detect and track smaller targets. It also improves the radar's existing computer with a new high-reliability multi-processor and rewrites the software to facilitate future maintenance and enhancements.

Air France Industries, under subcontract to Boeing, performed the installation and checkout at its facility in Le Bourget, France. Boeing flight-tested the upgraded aircraft in Avord, France, the main operating base for the French AWACS fleet.

The RSIP kit, built by Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, consists of a new radar computer, a radar control maintenance panel, as well as electrical and mechanical software and hardware.

"These enhancements will bring France's surveillance capability up to the same standards as our NATO allies," said Jean-Marc Roffi, French Ministry of Defense AWACS program manager. "Finishing ahead of schedule on this complex program was due to the outstanding teamwork among Boeing, Air France Industries and the French Ministry of Defense."

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