Boeing Delivers Major Upgrade for NATO AWACS Aircraft

Boeing [NYSE: BA] today announced the completion of a major mission system production upgrade for the first NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft under the $1.32 billion Mid-Term Modernisation Programme.

Boeing delivered the aircraft to NATO during a ceremony at the European Aeronautic Defence and Space (EADS) facility in Manching, Germany. EADS, as an industry partner and subcontractor to Boeing, completed the modification on schedule.

The entire fleet of 17 AWACS aircraft, based in Geilenkirchen, Germany, is on track to be upgraded in 2008. Boeing also is modifying two NATO AWACS mission simulators into the Mid-Term configuration.

"Achieving this milestone represents the culmination of a true international effort by many talented people from across North America and Europe, including NATO, the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Programme Management Agency, Force Command, the U.S Air Force and more than 15 key subcontractors from 12 nations," said Lee Strom, Boeing NATO AWACS Mid-Term Programme production and retrofit program manager.

"This has been, and will continue to be, a prime example of how great companies and their customers can work together on a global scale to field a world-class product," he continued. "NATO AWACS is now the premier airborne surveillance aircraft."

The enhancements provide a superior view of the battlespace by integrating data from various AWACS sensors, as well as from other sources, and an increased capacity in the number of targets it can manage.

This highly capable mission system provides NATO AWACS aircraft with the ability to receive mission orders from remote locations and updates via satellite data links and electronically integrate them via the mission computing system.

The system offers increased interoperability with other AWACS platforms as well as with fighter aircraft, ground stations, ships and satellites.

The enhancements include:

- New situation display consoles with flat-panel displays offering a Windows-like environment;
- A mission computing system with an open architecture allowing cost-effective future upgrades to the hardware and software;
- Multi-sensor integration that improves the reliability and accuracy of target tracks and identification and eases operator workload;
- Digital communications systems to improve crew access and use of radio links including improved over-the-horizon communication via satellite links;
- Broad-spectrum VHF radios that will support increased operations with Eastern European nations' air and ground forces. An improved identification friend or foe system compatible with emerging international air traffic control systems requirements; and
- Upgraded aircraft navigation that takes advantage of the new Global Positioning System.

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 $30.8 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; a foremost developer of advanced concepts and technologies; 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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