Boeing Successfully Completes First Test Flight of AEW&C Peace Eagle Aircraft

Boeing [NYSE: BA] has conducted a successful first test flight of a 737 Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft for Turkey's Peace Eagle program.

During the 2.5-hour flight from Boeing Field in Seattle, pilot Regis Hancock and first officer Randon Stewart performed a series of functional tests that verified the airworthiness of the aircraft's systems and structures. The flight follows major aircraft modifications, including the installation of an advanced antenna, ventral fins and mission system equipment.

"This is a major milestone for the program and a big step forward in our development and testing of this critical capability for our Turkish customer. We planned the flight almost a year ago and achieved it on schedule," said Mark Ellis, Boeing Peace Eagle program manager.

Additional functional test flights are planned in the coming weeks, leading to mission system flight testing in the fall.

The Peace Eagle program includes four 737 AEW&C aircraft plus ground support segments for mission crew training, mission support and system maintenance. Modification of the first aircraft is under way at Boeing facilities in Seattle. TUSAS Aerospace Industries in Ankara, Turkey, will modify the remaining three aircraft

The 737-700 features 21st century avionics, navigation equipment and flight deck features. Because of its advanced technology, the aircraft requires minimal downtime for maintenance. The 737 series has a worldwide base of suppliers, parts and support equipment.

The aircraft also is equipped with Northrop Grumman's Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array antenna with integrated identification friend-or-foe capabilities. The system also includes a flexible, open architecture for cost-effective future upgrades, an extensive communications suite and aerial refueling capability.

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