Boeing Conducts Successful Avenger-Mounted Laser Tests

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] has successfully demonstrated that its Avenger-mounted laser system can neutralize the kinds of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) that threaten U.S. troops deployed in war zones.

During laser firings Sept. 26-27 at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., the Laser Avenger engaged and destroyed five targets representing IED and UXO threats. Laser Avenger, equipped with a 1-kilowatt solid-state laser, proved its effectiveness at ranges that allowed the system to be operated at safe distances from the target. During the test, the system also took a step toward demonstrating a counter-unmanned aerial vehicle capability by destroying two small unmanned aerial vehicles that were stationary on the ground.

Laser Avenger is a Boeing-funded initiative to show that directed energy weapons are relevant to today's battlefield and are ready to be fielded. Boeing developed the system in only eight months, underscoring the company's ability to rapidly respond to warfighters' needs.

Laser Avenger also is the latest in a series of Boeing upgrades to expand the Avenger air defense system into an Agile Multi-Role Weapon System (AMWS) with ground-to-ground as well as ground-to-air capability. The laser was added while retaining Avenger's ability to carry other weapons, including missiles and a machine gun. By building upon the Avenger, of which there are over 600 fielded worldwide, Laser Avenger will take advantage of an existing global logistics network, making it highly supportable.

"Boeing's investment strategy is to move some of its new directed energy weapon systems into field demonstrations, and Laser Avenger is the first one we're rolling out," said Gary Fitzmire, vice president and program director of Boeing Directed Energy Systems. "Laser Avenger provides the speed-of-light and ultra-precision capability that the warfighter needs today to safely neutralize improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance."

"Laser Avenger marries the best of Boeing -- our proven Avenger system with the great capabilities of Boeing's directed energy business unit," said Debra Rub-Zenko, vice president of Boeing Integrated Missile Defense. "Adding a laser to the Avenger arsenal expands the capability of this flexible system to meet battlefield requirements today and tomorrow."

The laser segment of Laser Avenger will have uses beyond the counter-IED, counter-UXO mission. For instance, it could be upgraded to have a shoot-on-the-move capability and to destroy other kinds of targets, including low-flying unmanned aerial vehicles.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.4 billion business with 72,000 employees worldwide.
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