Boeing KC-767 Tanker: Capability Where it Counts

ST. LOUIS, May 22 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- With advantages identified by the U.S. Air Force in the areas of mission capability, survivability, aerial refueling technology, operational utility and ability to respond to real-world mission scenarios, the Boeing (NYSE: BA) KC-767 is the best tanker for the future conflicts anticipated by the U.S. Defense Department.

"U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently stated that the wars of the future will resemble the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Mark McGraw, vice president, Boeing Tanker Programs. "Therefore it follows that the KC-767 tanker is the ideal plane for future conflicts. It has the ability to operate out of smaller forward airfields to efficiently and effectively serve our warfighters, take advantage of existing infrastructure close to expected hot spots and do it all with a more capable, lower-cost, lower-risk, more survivable tanker."

Secretary Gates said in a speech earlier this month that, "the kind of capabilities we will most likely need in the years ahead will often resemble the kinds of capabilities we need today." He added that, "any major weapons program, in order to remain viable, will have to show some utility and relevance to the kind of irregular campaigns that ... are most likely to engage America's military in the coming decades."

A costlier, riskier tanker put forth by the team of Northrop Grumman and the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) was chosen by the Air Force Feb. 29 as the replacement for the aging fleet of medium-sized KC-135s that met U.S. military requirements through the Cold War, Vietnam and Desert Storm. The same aircraft are providing aerial refueling to American and allied forces today in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Air Force Request for Proposals seemed to call for a medium-sized tanker designed to meet the unique needs of today's expeditionary Air Force. During the evaluation of the two offerings, 98 positive discriminators, or strengths, were identified for the KC-767 compared to 30 for the Airbus A330-based plane.

"The Boeing KC-767 offered much more in terms of capability for bringing the right number of right-sized planes and the right amount of fuel to the fight," McGraw said. "The top 10 strengths of the KC-767 drive home the superiority of the Boeing plane for this mission."

According to the KC-X evaluation, top discriminators in the areas of capability, aerial refueling technology, real-world operations, survivability, operational utility and secondary mission capability include:

-- The ability to refuel multiple types of aircraft, including the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft
-- Ability to isolate, transport and off-load multiple fuel types
-- Less fuel burned, less foreign bases required and less sensitive to geo-political base denials in operational scenarios
-- Fuel tank and ballistic threat protection
-- Aerial refueling operator station
-- Ability to carry higher weight cargo on the main deck
-- Ability to carry hazardous material on the main deck
-- Aeromedical crew displays and the ability to generate therapeutic patient oxygen
-- Advanced communication and navigation capabilities and future growth potential

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SOURCE: Boeing

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